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FAST FOLKS; ⁹⁰⁴
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OR,

The Early Days of California.

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS,

BY

JOSEPH A. NUNES, Esq.
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PHILADELPHIA:
BARNARD & JONES, PRINTERS,
No. 510 MINOR STREET.
1861.

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By JOSEPH A. NUNES,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court, of the Eastern
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DEDICATION.

TO THE HON. WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

DEAR SIR:

The following pages are the result of some hours of relaxation during a professional sojourn in the mountains of California, and profess to be no more than a reflex of some of the phases of society in the early history of that noble State—at a time shortly after the discovery of gold there; when the tide of emigration flowed like a torrent from all parts of our beloved Union, and found no resting place until the distant Pacific coast had been reached.

The Comedy, (if I may dignify it with that title,) was written without any intention of having it either represented or published, but chance subjected it to the criticism of an artist of some celebrity, whose persuasions were potent enough to overcome the natural diffidence of untried authorship. It was played, and successfully, and having, to that extent, become public property, I have concluded to put it in a form in which it may either serve to amuse my friends, or, in the hands of my enemies, be a vehicle of punishment for the presumption of having written it.

Of all the Statesmen of the present generation, California has most reason to be grateful to you, for you have been her firm, undeviating friend from the period of her first introduction into the glorious sisterhood of States, and nothing that your great talents or influence could achieve has been withheld from her, or from the development of her permanent prosperity. Under these circumstances, duty would prompt, even if inclination did not suggest, that the tribute of this "Dedication" should be tendered to you.

I trust you will accept of it in the spirit in which it is offered, without criticising too severely the pages on which it is inscribed; for if these could be worthy of your acceptance, they would surely possess merits which would entitle them to more than an ephemeral existence.

Sincerely your friend,
And obedient servant,

JOSEPH A. NUNES.

FAST FOLKS;
OR,
THE EARLY DAYS OF CALIFORNIA.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

HOWSON.—In love with Julia.

HARRY FAIRFIELD.—His friend—the lover of Lucy.

GENERAL CAZADOR.—A Peruvian officer, supposed to be attentive to Mrs. Hunter.

COLONEL BLUSTER.—A hero, by his own report; a matrimonial and political speculator.

TOM WILKINS.—His friend—a useful man.

BILLY BAKER.—A young man who has not made his fortune yet.

BARNEY.—A Porter—in love with Jenny.

GRABIM.—A Justice—profound in legal law.

GEE HO.—A Chinaman.

POLICEMEN.

CITIZENS.

JULIA EVERST.—Beloved by Howson.

LUCY MELVILLE.—Her friend—betrothed to Fairfield.

MRS. HUNTER.—Julia's aunt—a supposed widow, with a predilection for Spiritualism.

JENNY.—Maid to Lucy.

FAST FOLKS;
OR,
THE EARLY DAYS OF CALIFORNIA.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

	AS PLAYED IN SAN FRANCISCO At the American Theatre, July 1, 1858.	PLAYED IN PHILADELPHIA At Arch St. Theatre, January 20, 1859.
HOWSON,	Mr. J. Wallack.	Mr. Dolman.
HARRY FAIRFIELD,	Mr. Kingsland.	Mr. Wright.
GENERAL CAZADOR,	Mr. Leman.	Mr. J. Gilbert.
COLONEL BLUSTER,	Mr. Ryer.	Mr. J. S. Clarke.
TOM WILKINS,	Mr. Thompson.	Mr. Stearns.
BILL BAKER,	Mr. Barry.	Mr. Shewell.
BARNEY,	Mr. Courtaine.	Mr. Johnson.
GRABIM,	Mr. McCabe	Mr. Bradley.
GEE HO,	Mr. Lovett.	Mr. Saphore.
POLICEMAN,	Mr. Brown.	Mr. Street.
JULIA EVERST,	Mrs. J. Wallack.	Mrs. J. Drew.
LUCY MELVILLE,	Miss Grattan.	Miss E. Taylor.
MRS. HUNTER,	Mrs. Judah.	Mrs. J. Gilbert.
JENNY,	Mrs. Burrell.	Mrs. Stonecall.

FAST FOLKS;

OR,

THE EARLY DAYS OF CALIFORNIA.

COSTUMES.

HOWSON.—Citizen's dress.

FAIRFIELD.—“

CAZADOR.—Undress Military.

BLUSTER.—Single-breasted frock coat, flashy vest, hessian boots, yellow hat.

WILKINS.—Red shirt, fancy pants, worn inside boots, heavy white coat, glazed cap.

BAKER.—1st dress—torn shirt, hat, pants, and boots. 2d dress—good boots and hat, grey shirt and grey pants, worn inside boots.

BARNEY.—Calico shirt, worn over red undershirt, pants in boots, grey jacket.

GRABIM.—Black pants in boots, dark loose coat, calico shirt, yellow hat.

POLICEMAN.—Blue shirt, pants in boots, black felt hat.

GEE HO.—Chinaman's dress.


JULIA.—1st dress—usual ladies' costume. 2d dress—ball costume.

LUCY.—“ “ “ “ “

MRS. HUNTER.—“ “ “ “ “

JENNY.—Merino or silk dress.

CITIZENS.—Woolen pants, worn inside boots, flannel or check shirts, and felt, glazed, or yellow hats.

 Passages marked with inverted comas may be omitted in acting.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY HOWSON.

Westward the Star of Empire takes its flight,
And sleeping lands awake beneath its light;
All human interests one by one unfold,
And, though aroused, at first, by tales of gold,
(Uncounted gold, in never failing streams,
Such as exist in fables, or in dreams,) Expand beyond the simple, sordid thought
Which comes at length to be considered nought;
Or, only as the source from which we trace
A nobler era for the human race!
Here—from the kindly bosom of the soil—
Spring health and wealth for all the sons of toil:
Here—commerce finds a home; and on its wings
Glad tidings bears, and from earth's confines brings;
Here, the same stream that fills the miner's flume,
In time will speed the spindle and the loom!
Here, science finds new fields on which to pore,
And largely adds to its exhaustless store;
And here—where late was but a howling waste—
There glow the graceful forms of Art and Taste!
Wonder not, then, if, with becoming dread,
The Thespian muse lifts up her modest head,
And pleads, in whispered tones, that she may boast
A home established on this happy coast;
For she, as erst, advances and departs
In the bright train of all her sister arts,
And claims—whilst noting human smiles or strife—
The right to hold the mirror up to life!
To-night our author shows, in strong contrast,
The placid present, by the whirling past,
And seeks, with ardent hope, to win your praise
For truthful sketches of our early days!
You are the court to which he brings his cause;
He asks a verdict of—your kind applause!

FAST FOLKS;

OR,

THE EARLY DAYS OF CALIFORNIA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A street in front of a hotel.*

Enter GEN. CAZADOR, BLUSTER, and WILKINS, R. U. E.

Blus. (*Aside to Wilkins.*) I'll think it over in the morning, Tom; in the meantime treat the boys on my account, and call on me for change.

Wilk. Colonel, you know the way to take the boys! We'll drink your health, and, at the next election, a good office to you! I'll see the nomination is all right. (*Shakes hands with Bluster, bows familiarly to Cazador, and exit L.*)

Blus. There's not a man in town, sir, more useful than Tom Wilkins! His home is in a row, and managing elections forms his chief delight, and brings out all his greatness! Which side he favors, wins; though some are base enough to say he favors those who pay the best! Mere jealousy, sir, and scandal!

Gen. C. (*Ironically.*) He is abused by envious tongues, no doubt; but only shares the fate which always follows greatness! You are happy in possessing such a friend, and may securely build upon him in your future plans!

Blus. There's where my trouble is! The *future's* bright enough; but it is a plague upon a gentleman's invention to be driven to make shifts for *present* purposes! Work, I will not; cannot, if I would—because 'tis cursed plebeian! "A laboring man's no better than a horse; excepting that he has the gift of thought; and that's an aggravation to his state, because he can observe the difference 'twixt conditions, and vainly strives for what he cannot reach."

Gen. C. Some, whom the world calls wise, have thought that man was formed for labor: "That labor dignifies him, as it gives him life: is health to the frame, employment to the thoughts, peace to the mind, and virtue to the soul: the source of all the comforts he enjoys; the cause which builds him up creation's lord!" But your philosophy is more profound, and proves the argument mere sophistry. Still I am perplexed to know how it is—without control of vulgar gold, and with high-bred disdain for toil—you manage to exist. I hear you say you never have been rich, yet do you live as few who're wealthy do! You ride, and drive, and drink, and dress, and game, as though possessed of means unbounded!

Blus. Nature, sir, designed me for a gentleman; but in her haste, with other work just then on hand, the jade forgot to furnish means to keep the station up. But then she gave me shape and talents! which, until now, have stood in place of an estate inherited—have furnished meat and drink to me. When I can pay, I pay; and when I can't, I owe; and others suffer 'stead of me: and thus I humor nature in her kind intent, and take myself what she, in haste, forgot!

Gen. C. Without a blush, he boasts his shame, and seems to think it glory! (*Aside.*)

Blus. Of course, 'tis often inconvenient—for creditors are selfish dogs, and never think of any man's necessities, except their own. Still—when I grow rich—I mean to pay my debts. I'll have an office soon, and sooner have a wife shall bring a fortune with her.

Gen. C. If you succeed in winning Melville's daughter, you'll have a fortune, sure enough. Her father is a mine, a perfect mint.

Blus. If I succeed! How can I fail, and bear the form I do! 'Tis true, she's rather shy as yet—to draw me on!

Gen. C. To draw you on?

Blus. For that alone—because her looks express her thoughts, and those speak libraries of ardent love! Have you observed her looks when I am near?

Gen. C. If aught for him they have expressed, it is aversion, and not love; but who could make the fool believe this fact? (*Aside.*) I have; and feel assured—if ever looks have been interpreters to thoughts—Miss Melville is in love. You have a rival, though. Young Fairfield is her father's friend, and aims to claim a nearer title.

Blus. A bandbox man, he is. A counter-jumping merchant, fit only to sell goods, and whisper chamber-maids. Miss Melville endures the sentimental swain, to please her father; but she has eyes to see the difference 'twixt a *thing* like he, and—hem! you understand!

Gen. C. A gentleman of chivalric bearing, like yourself! Else were she blind, indeed.

Blus. Were he in fact a rival, I'd find a way to make him fly the track.

Gen. C. Indeed!

Blus. The plainest thing in life! rip out his heart, or send his head a-kiting to the clouds.

Gen. C. The most effectual means that could be named! and simple, too, excepting for the risk. A halter's not a pleasant subject for reflection.

Blus. Cowards and children start at shadows, sir. A brave man runs all risks! (*Crosses to R.*) Besides, there are a hundred ways to force a quarrel on, and take a life with safety.

Gen. C. I had not thought of that. So far I am behind the age. But see—your threat has conjured up the man himself, and with him comes his friend.

Blus. Then, General, we'll go in; not that I fear to meet them both!

Gen. C. Certainly not!

Blus. Certainly not! but yet I fancy neither, well enough to stay; and have no quarrel yet with Fairfield. (*Going.*)

Gen. C. I'll but exchange a word with them and follow you. (*Exit Bluster c.*) Now, is he more a fool than knave, or knave than fool, or coward, than them both? He's certain all the three! The only question

is, in which he most excels! (*Enter HOWSON and FAIRFIELD, R. 1 E.*) You've started off a most heroic soul, who studiously avoids your contact but to spare your life! (*Shakes hands with Howson, and crosses to R.*)

How. In what have we offended so great a man as Colonel Bluster?

Gen. C. You are without the pale of his consuming rage! Fairfield, he thinks, aspires to love where his own hopes are fixed. His doubts alone allow a respite to your fate. (*To Fairfield.*)

Fair. The vain, presumptuous fool! His head's as empty as a drum, and, like a drum, it utters naught but loud, unmeaning sounds. Such fellows but deceive themselves in thinking men of sense put faith in their self-praise.

How. Dare you indulge in strictures so severe, and quite forget that Bluster bears the august title of a Colonel?

Fair. Even his title I contemn; for, like the thousand other Colonels who parade the streets, his rank, most like, is of his own creation! (*They laugh.*) At best, he's been some Governor's Aid du Camp, or Colonel of militia regiment, parading once a year, on training days, or led some emigrants across the plains, or headed rows upon election day! Any thing confers a title here. But, General, I am surprised to see a man like you in close companionship with such a jackdaw!

Gen. C. You would not wonder if you knew us both, for he's a walking joke! while I—amidst a crowd who're seeking wealth—seek only for amusement, “and find “it in exhaustless streams while studying Colonel Bluster.” He's new to me, and gives such little pains to draw him out.

How. He's one of many that you'll see ere long, and weary of, the more you see.

Gen. C. An overdose of sweets will make the palate sick, and even Bluster may, in time, e'ereloy the taste. I must rejoin him, though, lest he concludes I am intriguing with his foes. Will you go in? (*Going.*)

How. Not till we hear an invitation from the gong. We'll nurse our appetite in the open air.

Gen. C. We'll meet at table, then. (*Exit c. Howson and Fairfield pass to L.*)

Fair. O what a power there dwells in idleness!—"a spell that's felt, yet not acknowledged; unnoted, though pervading!"

How. What spell is that your wisdom finds in lack of occupation?

Fair. The power that makes us neighbors to the stars—the power to magnify, "and see the things, which, but for that, had been unseen—the power" to swell an ant-hill to a mountain—to make an ape appear a man!

How. The telescopic power to magnify a Bluster, and in his own conceit to make him seem the General's friend, and Harry Fairfield's rival. (*Laughs.*) That is the sum of your philosophy.

Fair. The total sum. You've guessed it like an oracle. That Bluster's my aversion.

How. Poor wretch! and wherefore so?

Fair. I hate a fool!

How. You do him too much honor by the thought. Were he indeed a man of fair pretensions, he might excite a jealous pang or two, in this conjuncture of your love affairs. A mistress angered, is no theme for jest, where ladies are so scarce.

Fair. I fear no rivalry in Lucy's love; nor is she angered, as you say. A coolness from a trivial cause exists between us, but no quarrel. "A summer's cloud, no more; which, when it is passed, will leave the skies more bright." Some blunt advice I gave aroused her pride, and she expects I'll humbly sue for pardon!

How. While you would play the tyrant, ere you're wed, and stand upon prerogative?

Fair. O, no; I'll yield—in time; but first I'd have her judgment be convinced that I was right. A good example you may profit by, in wooing your fair Julia.

How. My Julia! I wish she was. I'm over head and ears in love, and she should be the same; but if she is, I'm none the wiser for the fact. She's cold or warm,

by turns; or strange or kind; as suits her fancy. In fact, she is the most capricious—

Fair. What!

How. Saint or sinner, man was ever plagued or pleased with. (*Gong sounds.*)

Fair. There is a sound, angelic as her voice. Let's in and dine, and after, seek the heaven our saints inhabit. (*Going.*)

How. Have with you. We'll fortify the flesh, the better to endure what our divinities decree, should they incline to mortify the spirit. (*They exit c.*)

Enter BAKER, R. 1 E., rushes after FAIRFIELD, and returns disappointed.

Bak. My luck again! After a hunt through all the town, I'm just in time to hear the dinner-bell, and see him vanish at the sound! Straight from the mines, and hungry as a wolf! and nary red to buy a meal of victuals with! I must see Mr. Fairfield! As a sort of old acquaintance, he'll surely help me to do something. (*Gong sounds.*) Why don't that thing dry up! 'Tis bad enough to feel an appetite like mine, without having it tantalized by dinner-bells. What would they say at home, to see me in this plight! I who started off with such grand notions of a fortune! Long before this, I thought to make all Broadway stare, and take Fifth Avenue by storm! (*Examines his clothing.*) And so I would—if they could only see me now! I'd hardly pass though for a New York blood, or circulate among the upper crust! O, cousin Jenny, cousin Jenny! this sin is on your soul. You put the notion in my head; and quite as much it was to find you out, that brought me here, as even hope to find a fortune. But neither you nor gold have blessed my sight as yet. "I'm back again "in San Francisco, though, and one step nearer home. "If I can only speak with Mr. Fairfield, he'll help me on "another step, and maybe all the way." (*Gong sounds, he rushes towards the hotel, then suddenly checks himself.*) I'll have to come some other time. Human nature can't put up with sounds like that! (*Exit L.*)

SCENE II.—*Private parlor in the hotel.*

Enter JULIA and LUCY, 2 E.

Lucy. You little thought, a year ago, that you could be in this far land, and happy, being here!

Julia. A year ago! Six months ago I dreamed it not. My father, as you know, is, like your own, a widower, with only me to plague him, and my aunt, who long has sighed to doff a widow's weeds. She had outgrown her hopes at home; but in this new-found world, what might she not expect! Mad as the rest she grew—not for the gold—

Lucy. No!

Julia. No: but for a husband, whom her spirits (for she believes in spirits, Lucy, and has implicit faith in table rappings,) told her she would meet with here. By the aid of spells from out the papers, and stories from some friends returned enriched, she so impressed my father with her frenzy, that he gave up his modest gains at home, and started for this promised land!

Lucy. Which, but a month ago, you reached:—in time to 'scape the winter rains, and see our hills put on their brightest dress. You soon grew reconciled to what appeared so uninviting at a distance!

Julia. I did—and owe it to our unexpected meeting! A fountain in a desert, Lucy, could not have been more welcome than was the sight of one dear face, where all around were strangers!

Lucy. "I know not, Julia, whether I was most surprised or pleased to see you!" Of all my friends, you were the last I thought would venture on the trip! 'Twas but a year since we had parted, and then, you deemed me wild, because I'd not remain at home; and thought it living death to dwell so far from all delights of city life!

Julia. I did!—and thought with all your friends, and half the world, or more! for California was a dream-like place, and seemed but one remove from savage lands, where infants are devoured for lunch, and missionaries

served up—a dinner-dish! A visit to the moon was nearer to my hopes than such a journey! But, Lucy, was it filial love alone, that tempted you from home?

Lucy. What else could tempt me, if not that?

Julia. A lover is no slight inducement! Fairfield was here, you know!

Lucy. And if he was—what then?

Julia. A trifle, merely! You were his promised bride, and might indulge a wish to note if his affections wandered from their polar star! You'd scarce confess the soft impeachment now,—since love has turned to rage!

Lucy. You're doubly wrong!—but err the most in saying “love has turned to rage!” It has not so!—'tis love as much as ever!

Julia. Indeed! (*Smiles.*)

Lucy. You know it is! I am offended, and with reason, because the gentleman presumes to lecture me—while I've a father does not half so much! I'd scarcely bear it from a husband!—a lover should not venture the attempt—and so I let his lordship understand! But, Julia, I'll retort your question upon yourself; and ask, which love it was that brought you here?

Julia. No love at all brought me: but mere obedience! I knew not how to raise rebellion; or surely had rebelled, when the command to march was given!

Lucy. Was there no charm in the description given of Californians? their spirit of adventure, and their chivalric bearing towards our sex? To think of it revives the genius of romance, and makes them seem like knights of other days!—while they deem us—

Julia. A race of angels—only lacking wings!—(*Laughs.*) And so we are—to them: and well we may be, while so few are here! But for our knights!—imagine them beside the knights of other days! Conceive their costumes at a tournament! Some few might promenade in modern towns, and pass for city beaux; but for the rest!—their garments multiply the hues of light, and rack invention to conceive their shape!

Lucy. Laugh, if you will; but still they shall be knights, despite your mockery. “They but adopt the

"fashion of the times, as did the lion-hearted Richard
"or the great Saladin! These were costumed no more
"like Cæsar, than Cæsar like Napoleon, yet all were
"knights, and heroes too."

Julia. Call our Californians heroes, if you will; but do not take them to the days of troubadours, and let your fancy sketch them errant knights! How, in poetic vein, should you describe them, Lucy?

Lucy. Pshaw!

Julia. Nay, but it may be done. Suppose them passing 'neath our turret now. Observe the first array—red-shirted knights, divested both of coat and vest, with Hessian boots that tower above the knee, and pantaloons tucked in! They wear their beavers down, but not from choice,—the rims are broad, and so perverse they won't be fastened up. Next come the knights in shirts of grey, and blue, and brown; for lance in rest or battle axe, they bear the sword-cane and the bowie knife; while Colt's revolver takes the place of petronel! (*Crosses to L.*)

Enter JENNY, R. 1 E.

Lucy. A rescue, Julia, from your cavalcade! Jenny announces other knights than those in shirts red, or brown, or blue.

Jen. La, Miss, I didn't look at their shirts! but there's plenty in the parlor, though only two have asked for you, and for Miss Julia.

Julia. My new mantilla, Lucy, 'gainst a pair of gloves, I name them both.

Lucy. A wager I could win myself! Fairfield, of course, is one, and Mr. Howson, as his friend, comes wooing you.

Julia. As his friend! I disdain the implication! I'll not be liked because I am the friend of his friend's friend.

Lucy. You are jealous of his likings, then! I thought as much before.

Julia. Jealous of a man I've scarcely known a month! A proper man enough, I own, to please the eye, or

spend an hour in light flirtation with; but still a stranger.

Lucy. That tell-tale blush gives contradiction to your words. You love him, Julia!

Julia. How perfectly absurd!

Lucy. Even so; but still you love him! "Love is of a rapid growth in this prolific clime. The passions here are like the teeming soil—let but the germ be quickened, and straight the flowers are seen above the surface. You love him, Julia!"

Julia. Yes, as I love a dozen others! I love to tease him.

Lucy. You've read the fable of the man who sold the lion's skin?

Julia. And after—was himself devoured by the beast. I hunt no lions, Lucy. The men, you know, are lambs—till they are married. (*Crosses to R. followed by Lucy.*)

Jen. I expect, Miss, that's the reason why they sometimes look so *sheepish*—those that aint!

Julia. There, Jenny, that will do. Come, Lucy, even lambs may lose their patience. (*Going.*)

Lucy. It would be serving Harry right if I refused to go. [*They exit R.*]

Jen. There they go, as loving as two sisters; but not a bit more like sisters than me and Barney! What's the reason I said Barney? Why didn't I say Achille, or Tom, or even cousin Will? Poor cousin Will! how mad he used to get, when I would burst out laughing at him for his simple ways! He was as different now from Barney—there I go—with Barney again! Somehow, I don't know why, I never go to think of any nice young man, but Barney pops up right into my mind. I'm not in love with Barney, that is, not right dead in love! but still the saucy fellow comes just when he's least expected. (*Knocking at the door.*) Come in!

Enter BARNEY, L.

Bar. Jenny, you jewel! it's in luck I am to find you here, an' me a hunting only Mr. Harry!

Jen. If it is'nt Barney, I'm a sinner!

Bar. In course it is; an' is that all you've got to say?

Jen. All! No, sir, not all! I want to know how you've dared to come up to Miss Lucy's room, and never sent for by a single soul?

Bar. Sure, isn't it the very place to look for Mr. Harry in?

Jen. If Mr. Harry's all you want, you'll find him in the parlor, sir!

Bar. Then let him wait there, Jenny, till I come! Sure, it's myself that wouldn't be offendin' you by goin' off without a single hug! (*He attempts to embrace her, and crosses to R.*)

Jen. Keep your distance, Mr. Impudence; I don't allow such liberties to strangers! (*He approaches her.*) If you come nearer, you'll make me scream—you will.

Bar. Och, bother to your screamin'! Would you have the house go into fits? (*He takes her round the waist—she struggles at first, but gradually submits.*)

Jen. Yes, that I would,—if you aint got no manners!

Bar. O murder! just to hear how she can spake—an' to the man she loves!

Jen. The man I love!

Bar. That 's myself!

Jen. Don't flatter yourself with such a notion, Mr. Barney. I've plenty other sweethearts that, maybe, I prefer to you!

Bar. The bla'guards!

Jen. No, sir, not blackguards; but nice young men! There's cousin Will, was like to die for me, at home!

Bar. Why the devil didn't he do it, then! Sure, you couldn't marry him—he's your own flesh an' blood!

Jen. Well, then, there's Achille—he aint my own flesh and blood!

Bar. An' would you demane yourself to think of him—a dirty washerwoman that he is—when you can have a lad like me?

Jen. You'll please, sir, not abuse Achille; even if you are jealous of him!

Bar. Me, jealous of a washerwoman! O holy Jonah! an' you a lovin' me all the while!

Enter MRS. HUNTER, C. BARNEY *starts and seems confused.*

Mrs. H. Upon my word, good people, you are monstrously affectionate!

Bar. Blessed Saint Patrick! help me to a dacent lie this minit! (*Aside.*) The fact is, ma'am, that I came in with sich a noise as frightened Jenny, and made her nigh to dthrop; an', an'—

Jen. Yes, ma'am,—such a noise as made me scream, and nearly faint; and—and—and Barney caught me, ma'am—that's all!

Bar. But as she's better now—(*crosses to R.*)—aint you, Jenny? (*she nods*) I'll be after findin' Mr. Fairfield, ma'am. [*Exit R., beckoning Jenny to follow.*]

Jen. And I'll go tell Miss Lucy, ma'am, you're here. [*Exit R.*]

Mrs. H. As I am a reasonable woman, there's nothing goes on here but making love, or money: and it puzzles one to find out which is made the fastest! My niece is scarcely in the town before she is besieged by lovers, whilst Lucy counts her beaux by scores! Heigh-ho! even a lone widow may be sought, where ladies are so scarce! I've noticed Mr. Melville looks, at times, unutterable things; but, if I am to marry, my fancy's rather for that handsome foreigner—the General!—There's something in his features which reminds me of poor Hunter! 'Tis fifteen years since he was lost—the ship, and all on board; and still I am a widow—but am not always to remain one, if there is truth in what the spirits say! Hunter is my guardian, and always joins the circle when I'm there. He says I'll be a wife again in California! Well, fate is fate, there's no resisting that! So, if it comes, I'll e'en submit!

[*Exit L.*]

SCENE III.—*Public parlor in the hotel.*

FAIRFIELD and JULIA seated at a table playing chess—

HOWSON behind her chair, U. E. R. LUCY and CAZADOR seated 2d E. L., apparently in conversation: they rise and advance.

Lucy. It is, indeed, a glorious land: where nature is so prodigal of her bounty, that, within its confines, she dispenses gifts which, to the world beyond, make up the wealth of continents!

Gen. C. In climate and productions of the earth, no zone's unrepresented! We have from torrid heat and vegetation, to polar and perennial snows!

Lucy. You've traveled in the state!

Gen. C. I have:—in every part: and seen spread out the picturesque and grand, in scenes excelling all that's told of other lands! "No language can portray the pictures nature paints! The eye, and only that, must trace the artist in her bold designs!"

Lucy. You make me envy you the sights you've seen! They must indeed be grand! "It is while gazing on such sights we recognise the presence of the Great Supreme, and feel that we, too, are immortal!" Oh, I can drink such visions in, and rise beyond the clouds! Why do you smile? You think me too impressible, perhaps, for these utilitarian times!

Gen. C. Oh, no! Youth is not youth without enthusiastic thrills! "Yours is the golden age of life:—the blended age of fancy and of feeling! I love to contemplate that age; though I have passed the time, and find my raptures tamed to sober prose!"

Julia. (To Fairfield, as she moves a piece.) That was badly played! Your queen's in check!

Fair. (Who has been watching Lucy.) I see she is! I interpose the knight! (Moves.)

Julia. (Removing the piece.) And I, will take him captive!

How. Alas, poor knight! he has my sympathy! He's not the only one you've made a captive of!

Julia. His conquest is the greater triumph, though; because he made the bravest fight! It takes more skill to captivate these knights, than those you're pleased to mean!

How. You think so! and I'm not surprised! You've grown so used to conquer those I mean.

Lucy. (*To Cazador.*) With wonder I have heard described our hills—which pierce the clouds!—together joined by undulating links, where valleys smile in fabled beauty and fertility! Rocks, too, that frown like giants o'er ravines, whose sombre shades have never yet embraced a gleam of sunshine! Torrents—which, rushing to abyssmal depths, bound—in a single leap—full twice one thousand feet! Springs; that come roaring from the earth in huge, colossal fountains: and heated, as though emitted from stupendous reservoirs, where steam's engendered to propel the spheres! and trees! which, in their great circumference, might temples hold! and which, in height, look proudly down upon the pyramids!

Gen. C. Your sketch is faithful to the life! Hyperbole in language, here, cannot exceed reality!

Lucy. There's nothing in the world to *equal* that!

Gen. C. There is not—spite of all that poets sing, or tourists tell of Switzerland, or Italy!

Lucy. Why even here—in San Francisco, with its hills of sand—we have around us much that's unsurpassed!

Gen. C. The climate—

Lucy. Is all that's claimed for Italy, or is alleged of Southern France! Then the views from every hill-top! The bay's romantic: with its rugged islands and its thousand ships, (which freighted come from every clime beneath the sun!) while the bold shore that juts on every side, relieves mere beauty from the risk of insipidity, and lends it grandeur! The distant coast adds fascination to the scene:—and then the Golden Gate!—the ocean portal to this favored land—with its abrupt and rocky sides—completes a view that never tires the sight!

Gen. C. You should have been an artist, if a man : you paint with truthful poetry !

Lucy. The poetry is in the theme, and needs must reach the canvass ! “I think and speak plain prose ; “yet feel the poetry of every striking object, as I do of “every lovely sound !” I feel—when standing on these hills, and looking forth upon surrounding landscapes—that Californians should be more than other men ; in having more, where’er they turn, to elevate the mind above itself—to deify the soul !

Julia. (*To Fairfield.*) You’ll lose your queen !

Fair. It looks so now ; but if I do, you’ll take a mate !

How. (*To Julia.*) That should not cause you to complain—’tis only woman’s destiny !

Julia. It is a hard one, then ; in either game—the one of life, or this ; but least so, in the game of chess : I must avoid a mate in both !

Gen. C. (*To Lucy.*) Shall we look out upon the bay ? The moonbeams make the water like a mirror !

Lucy. (*Looking at Fairfield.*) He’s quite absorbed, and cares not if I go or stay ; I’ll go, if but to punish him for his neglect ! (*Aside ; takes the General’s arm, and they exit. c.*)

Julia. (*Removes a piece.*) It must be done !—Your queen is gone !

Fair. (*Looking round.*) I see she is ! and so is Lucy !

How. Don’t stare so, if she is ; but seek her at the window ! (*Fairfield rises.*) Leave me the final move—to give a mate to Julia !

Fair. (*Going.*) With her consent—of course. What say you, Julia :—will you take a mate from him ?

(*Exit hastily, c.*)

Julia. His haste has been so great, he did not get my answer !

How. Then give it now—I will receive it for him !

Julia. But scarce with welcome : as I answer—no !

How. That is a churlish answer ! Wherefore refuse a mate from me ?

Julia. Because you shall not gather laurels which

you never won!—nor am I in the vein to take a mate from mortal man! (*They rise and come down.*)

How. Then give a mate to me, and I'll submit!

Julia. You know there's no such move upon the board!

How. Not on the board we've left:—but, if you make the move I wish, and give yourself to me, I'll have a mate, which not the world can match! and which I'll take with proper resignation!

Julia. (*Curtseying.*) Your most obedient, humble servant, sir! Your fortitude is too astounding for belief! Yet must I think I'm not your destiny!

How. I wish you were!—as then I should embrace my fate with rapture!

Julia. But, as I am not, the rapture is not needed: while the embrace you can bestow on—

How. On what?

Julia. Upon an opportunity! There, do not look rebellious now! I meant to let you wait upon me to the ball, on Thursday night!

How. And is that all?

Julia. If you object, I'll find some other cavalier! They are not scarce, believe me!

How. You know I don't object! That was agreed before. Lucy goes with Fairfield, and you consent to make me happy for that night!

Julia. And does not even that content you?

How. Unreasonable that I am! not even that can give content! I'd have you always—have you to make up the sum of bliss of all my days and nights!

Julia. You have been looking at the moon to-night! it wraps you in romance!

How. I have! Will you not look upon it too?

Julia. First let me know if lunacy's contagious?

How. I hope so! If that is my complaint, I'd have it in the air, as well!

Julia. Come, then, we'll look upon the moon! 'Twere best, though, that we take a book along:—there is a charm in books by moonlight!

How. I think so too: it is the time for poetry and song! (*Goes to the table.*) Shall we take Lalla Rookh?

Julia. Think you, you could do justice to the gentle Hinda, and murmur forth—

“How sweetly do the moonbeams smile
To-night upon yon leafy isle!”

Mercy, no! There comes an ending too pathetic after that! Leave Lalla Rookh to dream upon the table:—but be sure to bring—

How. (*Advances towards her solicitously.*) Just what you please!

Julia. The Declaration, then, of Independence!—(*Laughs.*)

How. You'd almost tempt a saint to swear! Will you be kinder upon Thursday night?

Julia. Upon Thursday night! The world goes three times round by then! Who can predict so far ahead? Will you not look upon the moon? (*Retires, laughing, c.*)

How. I will:—to notice which is most inconstant—she, or you! (*Follows her, c.*)

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—FAIRFIELD'S *Store*. BARNEY *discovered moving boxes.*

Bar. (*Removes a box.*) You can stay there—forninst the flour—Mr. Candles, an' you'll be in dacent company! Sure it's lords an' ladies that you are—considerin' the price you bring! (*Comes forward.*) Well, what's the odds what livin' costs: sure wages costs a good dale more, an' makes a poor man soon grow rich! Another year, an' I'll go home to Ireland, an' buy a grand estate! I'll have petaties big as flour barrels, an' pigs like grizlies! An' won't I make 'em stare, to see me drive about! The boys shall all get drunk—in coorse! an' the girls—the darlins!—O, murder, murder!—an' me a goin' on like this, an' courtin' Jenny all the while!

Enter BAKER, L. Seems in search of some one.

Bak. This must be the place! (*Aside.*)

Bar. (*Eying Baker.*) Wouldn't he be a lovely figure now to have upon a ranch! He'd earn his wages kapin' crows away! (*Aside.*)

Bak. I say, my friend, whose store is this?

Bar. Where do you kape your eyes—an' can't see "Fairfield" on the doore! But what's the odds whose store it is:—we never dale in rags!

Bak. (*Looks at his garments.*) He's poking fun at my best clothes! "I'll give him back his change." (*Aside.*) You never deal in rags—don't you? But you deal in sauce, and keep a good supply on hand!

Bar. Is it sauce that you mane? Faith, an' you're right, my boy! We kape enough on hand to sauce you out of this; if you don't kape a civil tongue forninst your teeth!

Bak. We'll try that, Pat, (*Barney squares off,*) some other time!

Bar. Is it some other time you mane?

Bak. Yes, Pat, some other time—when no one's by

to spoil our sport! Mr. Fairfield's coming now; and sent me on to wait for him!

Bar. Bad luck to me! it's myself that's always makin' a mistake! (*Aside.*) Why didn't you tell me that before?

Bak. Why didn't you let me have a chance to speak before! But I don't bear you malice, man:—you took me for a beggar, or a thief! I look enough like one to make you think so!

Bar. Troth, an' you do, an' that's a fact!

Bak. Troth, an' I don't, and that's a fact!—excepting like an old-time thief. The business's not the same it used to be: thieves dress in broadcloth now!

Bar. Divil a lie is there in that! One can't tell dandies, now, from thieves, or thieves from dandies!

Bak. I'm poor, but neither beg, nor steal!

Bar. Be jabbers, then I take back all I said! Sure poverty's no disgrace:—but then it's mighty inconvenient!

“*Bak.* Let those who think it aint, just try it on a while!”

Bar. Here's Mr. Harry now!

Enter FAIRFIELD, L.

Fair. Barney! receive the goods unloading at the door!

Bar. I will, sir, in a jiffy! (*Exit L.*)

Fair. Well, Baker! You have passed a chequered year, it seems; and tried your hand at every thing. Attorney's clerk, at home; then merchant, here—musician, auctioneer, and cook! and last, an honest miner! How happened you to fail in that? The gold is here for all who choose to dig!

Bak. And so it is; if only one has got the luck to find the place! I've seen large lumps picked up that strained my eyes, as if the lids had been pinned back; but never struck a lead, myself, that led to more than wages!

Fair. And never saved a cent?

Bak. Yes, once I scraped together a few hundreds;

and then a devil—in the shape of one Tom Wilkins—tempted me to buy a claim that *promised* better than the one I had! (*Pauses.*)

Fair. Well!

Bak. Well!—the claim was salted!—that is all!

Fair. Salted! What is that?

Bak. It was prepared—fixed up—to catch such green horns as myself! The only gold it held, was what that rascal Wilkins placed there with his ugly hands, or shot out of his gun!

Fair. Do honest miners play such tricks?

Bak. No, *honest* miners don't; but such things have been known, as miners, and not honest! It don't improve a rogue to travel through the mines!

Fair. What did you next?

Bak. I laid in bed next—with the fever: “and there “I staid, for five the longest weeks I ever knew!” I hadn't strength to try the mines again when I got up, and so I worked my way down here: and here you see I am!

Fair. That proposition is too plain to be denied: but what to put you at, admits of more dispute! You're not fastidious about employment?

Bak. Not in the least, sir! I'll take whatever offers—from freighting clipper ship, to peddling peanuts! That last I think's the better business.

Fair. Suppose you try it, then! I will advance you all the capital you need; and, if you fail, find other occupation for you.

Bak. With all my heart, sir. I want no better chance!

Fair. Then come with me: I'll set you up at once, in business, (*looks at Baker's garments,*) and in better clothes; for those you'll need the first! [*Exit L.*

Bak. Every body seems to notice that my clothes aint new! I'll get into that other suit, and then—we'll let these rip! I wonder what I'll get at next—if peanuts won't go down! They will go down, if I can only cry 'em right! I've noticed men cry “oysters,” when at home, and women, “fish;” and thought the “oyster”

double bass as much too low as the soprana "fish" was pitched too high! A cry between the two is what I want. I'll think it over as I go along.

[*Exit L., trying a variety of cries.*]

SCENE II.—*Hall in the hotel.*

Bluster discovered.

Blus. Good brandy's just the thing for after breakfast tippie:—it puts a man in such fine trim for making love! It's now, or never, for Miss Melville! That glance of hers I caught last night, has brought things to a focus! It said, as plain as words, "why don't you offer, Colonel?" (*Mimics a female voice—Jenny heard singing without.*) There goes her maid—and just in time! (*Goes hastily to the door, which Jenny opens violently against his face.*) The devil! Don't you know I'm tender there? (*Rubs his nose.*)

Enter JENNY, C.

Jen. O, la! I didn't go to do it, sir! But aint it rather longish—for a nose?

Blus. (Sharply.) Not for a Roman nose, my dear! (*Eyes her.*) Upon my soul!—a very pretty girl!

Jen. Thank you, sir! I'm often told that here! The ojus creature! (*Aside and going.*)

Blus. Your name, my dear, is—

Jen. Jenny, sir! You'll hear Miss Lucy call it, too, if I don't hurry back! (*Going.*)

Blus. I'll hear a most delicious voice, then, calling a charming name! But, Jenny, spare Miss Melville's pretty throat, and take this card, my dear! Tell her that Colonel Bluster begs to see her in the parlor! (*Gives his card.*)

Jen. I wonder what the monster's got to say! (*Aside—takes the card, and moves slowly, reading it.*)

Blus. And, Jenny!

Jen. Sir! (*Turns to him.*)

Blus. You'd better take a kiss, my dear, to keep you warm!

Jen. Thank you kindly, sir! The doctor has'nt ordered me emetics yet! The drunken wretch! (*Aside, and exit L.*)

Blus. Emetics! That girl has shocking taste!

Exit L.

SCENE III.—*Parlor in the hotel.*

Enter BLUSTER, R.

Blus. Now, Bluster, my brave boy, you must prepare to do, or die; and aint quite ready yet to die, I know! What if she is a little different from the rest!—you'll not be cowed! She's but a woman, after all—but flesh and blood, rigged out in silks and lace! Pshaw! Who's afraid?—I'm not!

Lucy. (*Without.*) Say to Miss Julia, she will find me in the parlor! and bring my veil down, Jenny, when you come!

Blus. That's her voice! It comes upon me like a shower-bath, "and quite disturbs the liquor's inspiration!"

Enter LUCY, in street costume, drawing on her gloves, C.

Lucy. I am informed you wish to see me, Colonel Bluster!

Blus. Pray take a chair, Miss Melville! (*Offers one, which she declines.*) Why the devil don't she sit? (*Aside.*)

Lucy. Excuse me, sir; what you can have to say will not detain me long!

Blus. Longer, Miss, than you suppose! Do take a chair! After that look last night, she can't intend to throw me off. (*Aside.*)

Lucy. 'Tis very strange! (*Aside.*) As you insist, sir!—be brief, though, if you please! (*They sit.*)

Blus. That's something like a hint! Now, brass and brandy, here we go! (*Aside.*) Beautiful Miss Melville, turn your gaze upon these haggard features! Behold this faded form—this hollow eye—this sunken cheek—this, this,—

Lucy. He's drunk, or mad! I do wish Julia would come down! (*Aside.*)

Blus. I was about to add, Miss Melville: regard this—

Lucy. Excuse me, Colonel Bluster! I beg you will omit the rest! Your form and features cannot claim my thoughts, or be the topic of this interview.

Blus. Angelic girl! they must; for you, oh! you have brought them to this state!

Lucy. Sir! (*Draws her chair away.*) He's certainly insane! (*Aside.*)

Blus. I mean, fair creature! that my silent love has placed me in this wretched plight, and made of me the wreck you see!

Lucy. (*Rises.*) I like not, sir, your jests! They'd be presumptuous from a friend—but from a stranger!—they do not suit our limited acquaintance, sir! (*Going.*)

Blus. Stay, Miss Melville! Perhaps I hav'n't done it strong enough to please her yet! I'll try an attitude and see if that will bring her down! (*Aside—then throws himself at her feet.*) Loveliest of created beings! does this look like jest! Behold me at your feet: and hear me offer you my hand, my fortune, and my life!

Lucy. Rise, sir, rise! You are insulting me!

Blus. Never will I rise, till you accept my hand!

Lucy. This is too much to be endured! Remain, then, sir, and be transformed into a statue there! (*Turns to go out.*)

Enter JULIA and MRS. HUNTER, R.—BLUSTER jumps up.

Julia. (*Laughing.*) A most romantic scene! A thousand pardons, Lucy, for our rash intrusion; we never dreamed to meet with such a tableau! Come, aunt, we will retire!

Mrs. H. I am all amazement!

Lucy. (*Crosses to Julia.*) Do not leave me, Julia, I implore you! Your protection is most opportune!

Blus. (*Walks about enraged.*) The scene of which I'm made the butt, is fully comprehended, Miss! This insult was premeditated!

Lucy. I little doubt it was, sir,—though by you! May we be favored with you absence?

Blus. I'll have revenge, depend upon it!

Mrs. H. Revenge—upon a woman—Colonel Bluster?

Blus. No, ma'am: revenge upon a man! She has a purse-proud father, and a sneaking lover—a man of soap and candles, ma'am! I'll make them answer for her scorn!

Lucy. Begone, sir! You'll meet with their contempt, as well as ours!

Blus. You shall repent this, Miss!—in tears you shall! [*Exit violently L.*]

Julia. (*Laughs at Bluster.*) Come, Lucy,—don't stand there petrified! The morning's flying, and we have still a world of things to buy for Thursday night! (*Going.*)

Lucy. I am doubtful if I sleep, or wake—it seems so like a dream! [*They exit L.*]

Mrs. H. Was ever such impertinence! But I'm not surprised—no, not a bit! The spirits rapped it out last night, upon the table: though, then, I could not understand what it all meant!—'tis plain as noonday, now! [*Exit L.*]

SCENE IV.—*Street in front of the hotel.*

Enter HOWSON, with a letter in his hand, and CAZADOR, c.

How. This is capital, by Jove! A challenge—and from Bluster! (*Laughs.*)

Gen. C. If you doubt it, read; and be convinced! “The hero of that fierce epistle has but now retired to “his room:—the fumes of drink and frantic valor half “subdued by rising fears: and the conviction of his “rival's cowardice ebbing, as the fatal missive left his “hand!”

How. [*Reads from the letter.*] “Sir,—Insult from a lady—washed out in blood—satisfaction to the death—renounce the lady—General Cazador—speedy meeting! and signed “Lion Bluster!” This lion's roar is most terrific!

Gen. C. The terror is in his roar, alone! He'll prove as gentle as a lamb in action! He thinks that Fair-

field is the only barrier 'gainst his matrimonial hopes, and solaces himself with the delusion the barrier will sooner fly than fight! That last impression I have helped confirm!

How. Indeed! and wherefore?

Gen. C. To tear the lion's hide from off his back, and make him show the ears beneath!

How. You're a rare second for a desperate fight! I'll have no other when I need a friend!

Gen. C. With you, I should be a different man! A gentleman could not be made a jest of: but for an insolent pretender—I'd strip him of his borrowed plumes with most remorseless laughter!

How. It would be pitiful if such a jest should fail, yet such, I fear, will be the case! Fairfield will never condescend to fight this man!

Gen. C. I had not borne the letter if 'twould reach a fight! The challenge, though, must be accepted: I am involved to that extent!

How. Should Bluster keep his courage up?

Gen. C. Should the heavens rain down stars, the wonder would be less! but if he should—the fight goes on: with pistols—loaded by yourself and me!

How. With ball?

Gen. C. Why not? We'll have them in abundance—made of cork! But I must find out Fairfield now! When his scruples are subdued, and time and place arranged to do our bloody deed; there will be other work on hand for me:—Mars will be seeking Venus!

How. You are astronomical in your figures!

Gen. C. No: only mythological! I have a secret for fair Julia, to work upon her wonder, and on yours no less—when she can tell it you! Adieu! Expect a summons from your challenged friend! (*Exit L*)

How. (*Gazes after Cazador.*) "Mars will be seeking Venus! I've a secret for fair Julia!" What can that secret be? No man should be so intimate with fair Julia:—except her father, and one other—and I am he! He cannot be in love with Julia! The bare thought of it brings on a fever! There'll be a real

duel, if he is! Pooh! He knows he is too old for her; and she too young for him! He seeks the aunt, no doubt, and woos her through the niece! I am not prone to be suspicious, yet there is virtue in precaution; and so I'll manage to drop in before the confidential visit's ended! "When dealing with old soldiers, "prudence suggests both watch and ward! So, General, I'll be a sentinel myself!" (*Exit R.*)

Enter FAIRFIELD and CAZADOR, L.

"*Gen. C.* Your doubts are treacherous doubts! They "only prove how much you are in love!"

"*Fair.* They make a coward of me ere we take the "field! nor shall I dare to look at Lucy, till the end is "known! Howson and you must justify my absence "for to-night!

"*Gen. C.* We will!"

Fair. Say that I'm out of town! Be sure you're careless when you mention this, lest too much emphasis excites suspicion!

Gen. C. Fear not! The future is too plain for me to either show, or feel anxiety! But I must leave you now, to bear the news to Bluster! Conceive our conversation, if you can; it will repay the effort! (*Going.*)

Fair. If you meet Howson by the way, say that I'm seeking him; and caution him to silence!

Gen. C. I will! (*Exit R.*)

Fair. I'd not have Lucy hear of this for worlds! Her frightened fancy would depict me dead a thousand times each hour!

Bak. (*Without.*) Buy 'em up! Fresh roasted peanuts—six bits a pint!

Fair. I should know that voice! (*looks off R.*)

Bak. (*Without.*) Buy 'em up! Buy 'em up! Everybody buys 'em!

Fair. 'Tis my new *protégé*! he comes this way! I'll send him off to Howson's store, and save myself a walk!

Enter BAKER, in second dress, carrying a basket, R.

Bak. Everybody buys 'em—buy 'em up! Peanuts, sir? (*Fairfield turns.*) Mr. Fairfield!

Fair. Why, Baker, you seem surprised!

Bak. I didn't know 'twas you, sir; although you see I'm hard at work!

Fair. I'm glad to find you are and hope you thrive?

Bak. I can't complain, sir; considering its the peanut business: To make beyond expenses before the morning's over, is doing pretty well!

Fair. Few merchants do as well! You like the occupation?

Bak. O, better, by a heap, than seeking gold in salted claims!—and then it's healthy, too; for it improves the voice, and gives the lungs a chance! Excuse my asking, sir; but did you observe my cry!

Fair. A most persuasive cry!

Bak. I think it is! and then it's all my own! There's genius in starting such a cry!

Fair. I am such a friend to genius, that I'll tax yours in another line—if you will bear a message for me!

Bak. If I will! just try me once—I'm only glad to have the chance!

Fair. Come then, and take directions what to do! On your return, I'll see your genius is rewarded, and find a customer for your remaining stock in trade!

(*Exit L.*)

Bak. Now he is what I call a trump!—both bowers and the ace, he is! To think he offered me a choice between clipper ships and peanuts! How would he look beside that thieving Wilkins! Hang Wilkins! I'd like to meet him once down here! I'd sacrifice the peanuts, every one, to have a chance to cram my basket down his throat! (*Exit L.*)

SCENE V.—*Parlor in the hotel.*

GENERAL CAZADOR *discovered.*

Gen. C. Now to take Julia by surprise, and let her know her uncle lives! “She'll not betray me, for a day or two? Well, if she does, 'tis something can't

“be helped: the fact will be no secret then; and work
“no harm should it escape before!”—She’s here!

Enter JULIA, R.

Julia. I am glad to see you, General; but know not if this visit is for me, or for my aunt:—your card was brought to me! Aunt can’t believe but what ’twas sent to her! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. I meant it for none other than yourself! (*He places chairs, and they sit.*) I have a secret for your ear alone—which none but you should hear!

Julia. For my ear alone! That has an awful sound! If this should be an offer, now—what would become of aunt? He must not be encouraged! (*Aside.*) You prize your secret lightly, sir, to wish it in my charge! I find it difficult to keep my own; and scarce could trust myself with what pertains to you!

Gen. C. But it pertains to you no less! Besides, I ask no pledge but what you’ll freely give, when all is known! In this, I can confide in you alone!

Julia. It’s coming now—there’s no retreat! I only hope he won’t get up a scene! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. Your aunt—

Julia. I breathe again! He only means to ask me for my aunt! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. Your aunt believes herself a widow—

Julia. What does he mean by that! (*Aside.*) Believes! She is a widow, sir! and has been so for fifteen years! Her husband, sir, was wrecked at sea, and drowned! Though but a child when the event occurred, I recollect her grief; and reading, too, the sad account, announcing loss of ship, and crew, and all on board!

Gen. C. Your uncle had embarked his all on that same ship, (which sailed around the Horn, to trade on the Pacific coast,) and when she sank; your aunt, with reason, thought his life and his estate went down together!

Julia. Such was the case:—but where you learned those facts—

Gen. C. You soon will know!—first for the ship! No soul on board was ever heard of more!—and only portions of the wreck were seen adrift, near the Peruvian coast!

Julia. If he keeps on I shall believe in spirits soon!
(*Aside.*) Who are you, sir?

Gen. C. (*Smiles.*) Can you not guess? (*She shakes her head.*) Your uncle, Julia!

Julia. Impossible! He sleeps beneath the waves!

Gen. C. A pleasant spot, no doubt, for soft repose! but yet, believe me, he prefers a drier couch!

Julia. This is no subject, sir, for jest!

Gen. C. Indeed it is! for if I live, your unclè does! The sole survivor he, of all who started on that gallant ship! I was picked up at sea, while clinging to a broken mast, and after further toils—which may be told hereafter—was landed in Peru! You doubt me still, I see!

Julia. I can do nought but doubt—the story is so strange! and then the name—

Gen. C. Is Hunter, still; although translated into Spanish! “I made my home where I had disembarked, and when my neighbors learned what ‘Hunter’ meant, they gave it in their native tongue.” “At first I took exception to this change, but acquiesced at length; because it gave me influence I might not have acquired else.” I learned the trade of soldier in those lands of civil war; and met with such success, that years have passed since first I held my present rank! Are you not yet convinced?

Julia. How happened it you never wrote your wife?

Gen. C. I did—until I found no answers were returned! Some fourteen years ago—while glancing at the news from home—I read a statement of a steamboat sunk:—a list of those who had been carried down was also given; and in that list I saw my own wife’s name! From that eventful hour I deemed her dead; and was not undeceived, until a fortnight since, when she appeared again before my wondering eyes! She knew me not, and I had scarce known her, but for the name, and for your father’s presence with her! (*They rise.*)

Julia. But wherefore did you not, when your delusion ceased, dispel hers too, and claim your wife again?

Gen. C. Therein consists the secret you must keep! When satisfied I was not known, the humor seized me to remain unknown—to test how far my wife is proof against a second love! The climax has been almost reached; but needs your aid, and silence—for two mortal days!

Julia. There's so much of mischief in the scheme, that you may count on me for aid—even against my unsuspecting aunt! I never could resist temptation of that kind! But for the secret!—you'll let me tell it to one faithful friend!

Gen. C. Not to a single soul!—unless you wish to ruin all!

Julia. Oh, what a fearful task for me!—to keep a secret to myself!

Gen. C. (Laughs.) 'Tis but two days!

Julia. There's comfort in that thought; so I will vindicate the sex, by being dumb, until those days expire! But, uncle, you will disgrace your rank if all your battles are no better planned than this!

Gen. C. The plan is good: nor can the execution fail—unless we are betrayed by those within our camp!

Julia. The plan is bad!—unless defeat is good:—for yours secures defeat, no matter how it ends! If Cazador succeeds, he stalks in triumph over prostrate Hunter's form! and if he fails; the General's vanity receives a fall, while modest Hunter bears the palm away! Whichever wins, you're sure to lose!

Gen. C. I'm sure to win, as well as lose!—and lose but little by defeat—defeated by myself! None but Ulysses could be found to bend his bow, or win Ulysses' wife!

Julia. But yours, I fear, will yield her love, yet deem Ulysses far away!

Gen. C. That's to be proved: and, till it is, Ulysses gains no odds of me! While I can safely boast a right which Homer never gave the sage!

Julia. What high prerogative is that you urge, Ulysses did not have?

Gen. C. The right to claim a lovely niece—if she believes her uncle lives!

Julia. She does, indeed!—and thus confirms the right! (*They embrace.*)

Enter HOWSON, R. All start and seem confused.

How. Mars will be seeking Venus! (*Aside.*)

Julia. Mr. Howson!

Gen. C. What brought him here at such a time!

(*Aside.*)

How. (*To Julia.*) I fear my entrance is not more welcome than expected; and so will offer an excuse for unannounced intrusion, and take my leave!

Julia. By no means, Mr. Howson!—Pray take a chair! (*She offers one—he bows haughtily, declining.*) What will he think of me! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. My aid must be reserved for direst need! (*Aside—takes up a book.*)

Julia. The fact is, Mr. Howson— (*Pauses.*)

How. I saw that much myself! I want a reason for the fact! (*Aside.*) You were alleging, Miss, the existence of a fact; but had not named what fact you meant!

Julia. Shall I explain, and so betray my uncle's plot? I'll suffer first, and let him think his worst! (*Aside.*)

How. You were about, Miss, to remark—

Julia. (*Confused.*) No, sir, I was not! I intended merely to observe— (*Pauses.*)

How. I am properly corrected, Miss! You meant then to observe—

Julia. Yes, sir; to observe that—that—that we have had a lovely day! I am all confusion! (*Aside.*)

How. Confound the day! (*Aside.*) A most delightful day! The air has been too cool, perhaps:—indeed quite chilling, when I come to think! She'll know what air I mean by that! (*Aside.*)

Julia. Yet it seems warm to me—quite warm and sultry, here!

How. It may be so—just here! I feel it cool and warm by turns! Good day, Miss Everst! (*Going—bows stiffly to Cazador.*)

Gen. C. 'Tis now my turn to speak! (*Aside.*) Mr. Howson—a word with you before you go!

How. Some other time, sir: I am in haste at present! (*Bows frigidly, and exit R.*)

Gen. C. I'll follow and explain, as best I may, before his rashness takes a shape!

Julia Do, uncle! I'd not be misconstrued for worlds!

Gen. C. And shall not be—especially by Mr. Howson!

Julia. I don't mean that!

Gen. C. (*Smiles.*) I know you don't! Your blushing tells me so! He must suspend conclusions for a day: to-morrow night will solve his jealous doubts! (*Exit R.*)

Julia. To-morrow night! He takes me to the ball to-morrow night! Heigh-ho! I hardly know if most I wish to laugh or cry—there's so much cause for smiles or tears in what has just occurred! I'll to my room, and work the problem out by Rule of Three!

(*Exit L.*)

End of Act II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Private parlor in the hotel.**Enter JENNY, L.*

Jen. Oh, what a world this is we're living in! Lions and tigers; no, nor grizzly bears aint any match for it! I have no patience with the men! To think they'll cut, and slash, and shoot each other, as if they weren't flesh and blood! They'd better get them wives, they had, and have their eyes scratched out! Oh dear! oh dear! Here comes Miss Julia now, to hear the news! Her lover's mixed up with it too; but only to look on! I'd like that place the best, if it was me to fight!

Enter JULIA, R.

Julia. Where is Miss Lucy, Jenny? Such frightful rumors are afloat, I know not how to think or act!

Jen. It's all true, Miss—every word!—the whole town talks of nothing else! Just think, Miss Julia, every body knows what's going on, and not a soul there is to stop it! I'd like to know why laws are made, and judges in the courts, and constables, and sheriffs—if they can't stop a murder, done before their eyes!

Julia. The men you name, are officers of Justice, Jenny; and they think because that goddess is painted blind, they too must shut their eyes; nor see what all the world is looking at! But when the deed is past recall—the crime committed—they'll loudly talk about the outraged laws—and lecture with a sober face;—and issue writs, and summon juries, and listen to great speeches; and then—do nothing still! This Justice is but a solemn farce, I fear, where it should be a hope and shield! But tell me, where is Lucy—and does she know that Mr. Fairfield is involved in this?

Jen. Oh, Miss, she's nearly wild: and gone—the Lord knows where—in search of Mr. Harry!

Julia. Poor Lucy! Soon as she returns, Jenny, come to my room and let me know!

Jen. I will, Miss; the very minute she comes back!

Julia. I've sent to Howson and to my uncle, to see what power they have in this affair! My influence with Howson is in eclipse, yet what I have, shall be exerted! When life's at stake, 'tis folly to be over-nice.

[*Aside, and exit R.*]

Jen. What blinded creatures human people are, in spite of all their eyes! Who would have thought of this last night—when everybody was so happy! Miss Lucy and her lover, Miss Julia and hers, and me and Barney! (*Knocking without.*) I shouldn't be surprised if that was Barney, now—it sounds just like his knock! (*Goes to the door.*) And so it is—himself! Come in, Barney: there's no one here but me!

Enter BARNEY, slightly intoxicated, L.

Bar. Faith an' I'm glad of that, you rogue! There'll be just three of us, an' that's enough for fun to-day!

Jen. Three? Why there's only two:—who's the other that you mean?

Bar. You need'nt hould the dure to let him in—I've got him in my pocket, by the neck—an' there he is to answer for himself! (*Draws a bottle from his pocket and places it on the table.*)

Jen. I'm shocked to death, and petrified! Why, Barney, you've been drinking, sir!

Bar. By Saint Patrick's blessed bones, I have!—been drinkin', like a rale lord!

Jen. And you confess it, too,—and we in all this trouble! I'm ashamed of you, Barney! I blush for you all over!

Bar. Sure, it's trouble made me take to drink:—trouble for Mr. Harry! an' greavin's mighty thirsty work; for sure the more I greave the dryer I kape gettin'! Just take a taste to kape your spirits up;—it's a most beautiful invintion for that same! (*Offers the bottle.*)

Jen. Oh, Barney, throw the nasty thing away! Sup-

pose Miss Lucy should return and find you in the state you are—what would I say?

Bar. What would you say! Why be perlite, in coorse, an' bid her take a dthrop! But wait a bit—we'll stop her comin' in just now! (*goes to the door and turns the key,*) unless she comes down through the chimney!

Jen. You hav'nt dared to lock the door—and we alone together in this room!

Bar. Sure an' I'd dare do more nor that! but if you're afraid the dure aint locked, just look yourself an' see!

Jen. I don't know if you've got the most of impudence or coolness, Barney: but I do know that you've got enough of both for a whole family! Open the door again, sir, if you please!

Bar. Be asy for a minit, till we take a drink!

Jen. Not for a second, sir! Open it at once, I say!

Bar. First take a sup—the slightest taste in life! Sure, Jenny, it'll do you good! (*Offers the bottle.*)

Jen. Not a drop, sir! not a single drop!

Bar. Then I must take a little one on your account: an' drink for you a toast! Here's long life to Mr. Harry, and bad luck to Colonel Bluster! (*As he commences drinking a knocking is heard at the door, L. II.*) What the devil is that?

Jen. Good gracious me!—there's some one knocking now! If you should be discovered here, and the door locked, I'm a ruined girl! See, Barney, what your foolishness has done! (*Knocking continues—she wrings her hands and shows great alarm.*)

Bar. O, jewel! don't be frightened now:—I'll get you out of this at once, an' take myself away! (*Crosses.*)

Jen. (*Takes hold of him*) Stop, Barney,—don't go there, for mercy sake! That is Miss Julia's room, and she's in there now!

Bar. O murder, then; what shall I do? Quick, Jenny,—hide me somewhere! A tay-cup's big enough to put me in! (*Knocking continues.*)

Jen. Coming; coming! There, Barney, quick! get under this—and don't you stir or breathe! Whoever 'tis, I'll get them off at once!

Bar. Give me the whisky, an' I'll lay as quiet as a slapein ghost! (*Creeps under the table—Jenny arranges the cover so as to conceal him.*)

Jen. There, now, you'll not be seen unless you move! (*Crosses and opens the door.*)

Enter MRS. HUNTER, L.

Mrs. H. Jenny, why have you kept me waiting in the hall so long?

Jen. I beg your pardon, ma'am; but I got thinking of Miss Lucy, and crying, too; and cried myself asleep! I didn't hear you knock, at first! But Miss Lucy is'n't in, ma'am, and won't be back, I don't know when!

Mrs. H. I know all that; but mean to wait for her return! You may retire, Jenny; you'll not be wanted till she comes!

Jen. Ma'am!

Bar. Now I'm clane kilt!—this is the winding up of me! (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. I said you might retire, Jenny!

Jen. Yes, ma'am; but, if you please, I'd rather stay: I feel so bad I hate to be alone! What shall I do to get her out? (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. You were alone before I came! and, by the time it took to let me in, you seemed determined to remain so, too!

Jen. That was because I was asleep, ma'am: I didn't know I was alone!

Mrs. H. So you have said; but I wish now to be alone. I'll ring when you are wanted, Jenny! (*Draws a chair and sits near the table.*)

Bar. There's no fightin' agin that! Out she's got to go—then next will come my turn! (*Aside.*)

Jen. (*Moves slowly towards the door.*) I'm going, ma'am!

Mrs. H. I see you are:—to a funeral!—to judge your destination from your gait!

Jen. I'm afraid it is to a funeral—of a lost character and place! Oh Barney, Barney! what have you done this day!
[*Aside and exit L.*]

Mrs. H. I hope my speaking of a funeral is not a prophecy! I shuddered when I said it! It's a bad sign, at least, whatever happens!

Bar. Faith an' I think it is—to me! (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. What a frightful circumstance this duel is! (*Pauses.*) I feel as much concerned as Lucy does, but dare make no display! Custom obliges me to smother tenderness, except when I'm alone!

Bar. It would be a mighty obligin' custom if 'twould make you smother yourself, when you're alone!—(*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. I don't know all the risks the General runs; but have heard it said, a Second may be called upon to fight, if something happens,—but what, I don't remember now! It is a dreadful thought, and I must shut it from my mind! (*Shades her eyes with her hands.*)

Bar. If she'd only fall aslape now—jist till I could put the dure betwixt us two! (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. It cannot be! The spirits say I'll marry here; and plainly hint at him to be the man!—if that is so, his *life* at least is safe!

Bar. That's some comfort, anyway! Let's drink his health, ould lady! (*Aside—drinks, and, in doing so, moves the table.*)

Mrs. H. (*Starts.*) Can this be possible? I plainly saw the table tip!

Bar. Bad luck to it!—an' so did I! (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. I'm sure there are spirits in this room! I feel the influence upon me now!

Bar. Be dad! an' so do I! (*Aside—drinks.*)

Mrs. H. Perhaps they will communicate, and so dispel my fears!

Bar. Perhaps they will! We'll try! (*Aside—drinks.*)

Mrs. H. This table's larger than the spirits move:—but still I'll make the trial! (*Turns to the table and places her hands upon it.*)

Bar. What the divil is she goin' to do? (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. (*Pauses.*) If there are any spirits present, they will please manifest themselves by tipping the table! (*Barney tips the table towards her.*) I knew that

there were spirits in the room! The strange sensation in my joints convinced me of the fact!

Bar. It wouldn't be safe to trust the whisky in your hands; for it's myself that's got that same sensation in my joints:—an' in my head it is, besides! (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. If the spirits present will communicate, they will please rap upon the table! (*Barney raps loudly with the bottle.*) Mercy! What a manifestation! That's stronger than I've ever known before.

Bar. You'll have it stronger still, if you kape on! (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. Will the spirit present spell out its name? (*Pauses.*) No answer! I'll ask at once if Hunter's spirit's in the room! If the spirit is that of my departed husband, it will please rap three times! (*Barney gives three violent raps.*) I begin to feel alarmed! If I am a medium, there's no telling what the spirits may not do, in spite of my own will!

Bar. Be asy now! The spirit's not a goin to touch the likes of you:—sure it knows sheep from lamb! (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. I've heard of tables being lifted from the ground, and standing in the air! I almost dread to hazard the experiment!

Bar. Be jabbers, you can try it if you like: I'll be bound the spirit's strong enough for that! (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. If it should rise, I know I'd faint:—my nerves would never stand the shock!—but then the proof would be so strong! Who that could see, would disbelieve in spirits then! The effort must be made! (*She rises and places her hands a little above the table.*) If there is a spirit present, it will raise this table as I raise my hand! (*Barney, with the table on his head, raises it gradually, for a few inches; then suddenly, till he is erect upon his knees. As it strikes Mrs. H.'s hands, he groans, and she rushes screaming from the room, L. He then throws the table from him, laughing, and discovers himself, with the bottle in his hand.*)

Bar. (*Addressing the bottle.*) If there's any spirit present, it will plaze manifest itself by runnin down my

throat! (*Turns the bottle bottom upwards in his mouth.*)
“The divil a drop! The spirits is departed spirits: an’
“it’s myself that’s better be departed, too! Sure it’s
“lucky that I am, an’ not found out! (*Rises.*) If there’s
“any spirit present, it’ll plaze tell Jenny to look for
“me down stairs! (*Exit L.*)

SCENE II.—*Bluster’s room, 1 G.*

Enter BLUSTER and WILKINS, R.

Blus. I tell you, Tom, I won’t be made a target of! If Fairfield had said fifty yards, you’d never see me flinch:—but two paces!—’tis certain death! Be sure and have us both arrested, Tom, before the fight begins!

Wilk. But, Colonel, don’t that look like backing down?

Blus. Backing down! No! not a bit! I won’t commit a murder—that is all! Besides, who’ll know we stopped the fight? We’ll charge it on the other side!

Wilk. That would be a good election trick, but, in a fight, it stands no chance!

Blus. No chance!

Wilk. It’s easy sending officers around; but aint they fond of fun; and won’t they look just where you aint, and pop in only at the death!

Blus. Don’t talk of death!—it makes my blood run cold! It’s nothing when the monster seems a long way off:—but when he grins right in your eyes:—Ugh! I’ve seen skeletons enough since morning, Tom, to fill a dozen grave-yards!

Wilk. To scare a dozen babies, you should say! Why don’t you take a pleasant view of things?

Blus. A pleasant view!

Wilk. You’re thinking of the matter all the time, and see yourself shot through the heart at every pop!

Blus. How can I help it, Tom! Two paces—only think!

Wilk. And what of that!—why can’t you fancy you have killed your man? or, if you must be wounded,—

take a ball some other place! It isn't once in twenty times a man is killed outright!

Blus. It isn't once in fifty times he fights at such a distance, Tom!

Wilk. The distance is too short for safety, that's a fact!

Blus. I think it is:—unless we had cast iron clothes!

Wilk. You try and put the fighting off; if that's no go, we'll see what can be done with the police! I have a friend I've helped in there, and he may strain a point to serve us at this pinch! (*Going.*)

Blus. Be sure you don't commit me, Tom! He must suppose I'm full of fight! It's you that want it stopped—remember that!

Wilk. O never fear: he shall suppose you can't be held by twenty men! (*Exit R.*)

Blus. What a confounded fool I was, to run my head against a rock! I wish the devil had that Fairfield! What right had he to fight! He doesn't look as if he would—hang him!—that's where he took me in! I thought he'd frighten easy, and so leave me the girl! Hang the girl, too! 'tis she that's made this mischief! I won't fight, though—not if I can help it! But where's the help?—that's where the bother is!

(*Throws himself on a chair and seems abstracted.*)

Enter CAZADOR, L.

Gen. C. I have at last got Howson's rage subdued to simple discontent; and now can spend a moment with the Colonel! And there he sits—lost in deep thought of that dark problem, death! He'll never send another challenge:—not on such frail assurance as this last! (*Aside, then leans over Bluster's chair.*) Why, Colonel, you're looking sad to day!

Blus. (*Starts and rises.*) I must seem brave, no matter how I feel! (*Aside*) Only thoughtful, General, only thoughtful, sir!—and I was thinking, then, it may have been a little rash to start this fight! A woman's all I see in the affair, and she is no sufficient cause to hang a fight upon!

Gen. C. Gallantry, Colonel, should have died ere that was said! Woman no cause sufficient! Why, sir, since creation started, she's been the most prolific cause to set it by the ears! Troy flamed for beauteous Helen's smile, and the empire of the world was lost in Cleopatra's arms! "and since, too, kingdoms have been won, "or lost, as women smiled, or frowned!" and yet you claim they are not of consequence sufficient to found a single quarrel on!

Blus. You mistake me, General:—I don't mean they're not good cause enough for any man to fight about; I mean—I mean—damn me if I know what I mean myself! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. I comprehend you fully, Colonel! You don't deny that woman is, and rightly is, the mainspring of man's actions and his hopes—

Blus. By no means, General! I don't deny that, of course! Not while you control this fight! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. You simply think,—as there has been no personal collision in your case—if this unhappy meeting can, with honor, be avoided, you'll not insist on fighting Mr. Fairfield!

Blus. Thank heaven I've got him round at last! (*Aside.*) You've hit it to a notch;—just what I had commenced to say! If this duel can, with honor be avoided—with honor, sir—I shall insist on that—I'm not a man to thirst for blood! The matter's fixed I'm sure, "from what he said:" I'll save my credit now, and seem as bold as brass! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. Sir, the sentiment is worthy of a hero's soul! It proves that though you are alive to honor's call; you are not deaf when Mercy pleads!

Blus. General, just so!—I am not deaf when Mercy pleads! It's all right! The country's safe! I feel so light that I could swim on air! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. You vindicate yourself by such exalted thoughts: yet may be pleased to learn that this unhappy meeting—as affairs now stand—

Blus. Certainly, General,—as affairs now stand!—

Gen. C. Cannot with honor be avoided! It must proceed!

Blus. Oh, Lord! I'm down again! He's thrown a mountain on my head! (*Aside.*) But, General, I can't see why it must proceed—if we are both agreed to settle it!

Gen. C. But you are not both agreed! No intimation of the sort has Fairfield given; and should it come from you, the world would call you coward! “He'll wince at that, I know!” (*Aside,” and going.*)

Blus. Damn the world!—and all the people in it! I wish 'twould mind its own affairs! (*Aside.*) You are not going, General? There's something more I've got to say!

Gen. C. Defer it, Colonel, till we meet again. Miss Melville claims my presence now!

Blus. (*Eagerly.*) Miss Melville!

Gen. C. This matter, spite of all our pains, has been so noised abroad that it has reached her ears! I will return before 'tis night: till then, indulge in happy dreams! [*Exit L.*]

Blus. In happy dreams! If you could only have such dreams, you'd find a way to stop this bloody business, sir! There's comfort, though, in what he said about Miss Melville! What if she repents this morning's work—consents to be my wife, and—but no—she'll hardly do that much! She may apologize, and give some chance to take that cursed challenge back! She will, I'm sure she will:—that's why she sent for him! My case is not quite hopeless yet; for, at the worst, I still can look to Wilkins and his friend!

[*Exit R.*]

SCENE III.—*Parlor in the hotel.*

Enter LUCY, c., in street costume—places her bonnet on the table, and walks up and down.

“*Lucy.* Was ever woman so unfortunate as I! The hapless cause I am of this unlooked-for strife, and yet am helpless to prevent its fatal end! No matter

“what result it has, my doom on earth is sealed!”
“Should Harry fall—but no—that shall not be! it
“drives me mad to only think it may:—what should I
“be, were it indeed reality!” (*Takes a seat for an in-*
“*stant, and then resumes her hasty walk.*) I cannot even
“hear where Harry is! Oh, if I could but see him; my
“tears would sure prevail to stay this wicked deed,
“which, at the best, must make his misery and mine!
“I’ve sent to seek his friend:—why don’t he come!
“The world conspires to make me wretched! (*Throws*
“*herself in a chair.*)

Enter HOWSON, L.

“*How.* There she sits; and, as I thought, has heard
“it all! (*Aside.*) Miss Melville!

“*Lucy.* (*Starts and turns.*) Mr. Howson! At last
“you’ve come! (*Rises.*)

“*How.* And I have flown—obedient to your high
“behest!

“*Lucy.* This is no time for compliments, sir! This
“duel—is’t the truth I hear?

“*How.* Bluster has spread the news with such effect,
“denial is in vain! (*Aside.*)

“*Lucy.* He hesitates! Then are my worst fears con-
“firmed! (*Aside.*) I asked a question, sir! Is it the
“truth I hear about this duel?

“*How.* I scarce know how to answer you: but may
“admit that what you’ve heard, is true—and yet ’tis
“not!

“*Lucy.* You speak in riddles, sir! Explain yourself!

“*How.* It is true, a challenge has been sent, and
“been accepted: but ’tis not true that any one will be
“endangered! The duel—if it should take place—will
“prove a bloodless one! If she can take a hint, that
“should be plain enough! (*Aside.*)

Lucy. If it should take place! It must not take
“place! Fairfield must send the challenge back! Oh,
“sir, I have a right to speak in this:—I should have a
“controlling right! My peace, my life’s at stake, as
“well as his!

How. Our farce assumes a tragic air! Retreat
“were valiant now, if it were open still! (*Aside.*)

Lucy. You do not speak:—you know the claim I
“urge is just, and feel it should not be denied! Then
“lend your aid, and put a period to unholy strife!
“You are his friend—he will be ruled as you advise!

How. Fairfield is wise, and takes the safest place:
“mine is the only real danger! (*Aside.*) Miss Lucy, be
“assured that Fairfield runs no risk; nor is there peril
“to a single soul! Think you I’d speak and look so
“calmly, if there was?

Lucy. If, as you say, no danger is impending; then
“why is Harry absent? He thinks not as you do, else
“he were here himself! He only can remove my
“doubts!

How. He will!—though not so soon as you desire!
“He’s distant from the town just now!

Lucy. I’ll seek him then! He cannot be so far but
“I may reach him soon as you! Nay, do not speak,
“unless to tell me where he is! I have a right supe-
“rior to the world in this! Indeed, indeed, I must not
“be denied!

How. I never could conceive, till now, the luxury
“of being deaf! (*Aside.*) None can dispute your right
to know: but I possess no right to tell:—my honor’s
pledged against it!

Lucy. Your honor, sir!

How. It never yet has been profaned, Miss Melville!
and by that honor I declare that Fairfield is as safe
from harm as either you, or I! That should content
you, surely!

Lucy. In aught but this, I could not ask for more! In
this—forgive me!—but I cannot think the storm is o’er
while there are clouds impending!

How. There is no lightning in the clouds, you see:
nor are they clouds; “but harmless exhalations which
your fears distort!” To-morrow you will smile, while
painting them to Fairfield!

Lucy. If I could only send him word! (*Aside.*) You’ll

bear a message to him from me? Your pledge cannot prohibit that?

How. Most willingly! Whate'er you choose to send, I'll bear!

Lucy. Then bid him come to me at once! Say that all coldness is forgotten; and that I, who looked for prayers from him, now send him mine, to come!

How. I would you'd be convinced!

Lucy. What shall I say to make him come! (*Aside.*) Tell him that though he's loved with all the fervor heart can feel; yet, if for that heart's sake, he will not end this strife, I'll deem he holds my peace too light to have it in his trust!—and that—yet stay—'twere best to write:—if you will take a note?

How. Either I'll bear: a note, or message; as you please!

Lucy. I'll claim your patience while I write it then! I will not keep you long! [*Exit R.*]

How. Without a glass I can't tell how I look: but if my looks and feelings correspond, I seem like some great boy, entrapped beneath a tree! We are sublimely snared! To punish Bluster was the fruit we sought; but 'twould be hard to tell who's punished most! Fairfield I left, upon a bed of thorns; and now they're sharpened by his Lucy's threat: while I, am even worse than he—lacking the consciousness of being loved!

Enter JULIA, C.

Julia. Mr. Howson, I declare!—and all alone!

(*Aside.*)

How. (*Not seeing Julia.*) I shall forswear the sex, and live a hermit all my days!

Julia. You will forswear yourself, sweet sir, unless your days are of the shortest! (*Aside.*)

How. The fickle, heartless jilt! She is unworthy of the love she gained! (*Sees Julia.*) Miss Everst! Pray heaven, she did not hear that last! (*Aside.*)

Julia. He shall repent that slander on his knees!

[*Aside.*]

You were speaking as I entered, sir! If what was said was meant for me, I beg it may be repeated!

How. I was unconscious of your presence, quite; and merely thought aloud:—an awkward habit I have acquired of late!

Julia. Of very late!—no earlier than since morning!
(*Aside.*)

How. You have honored me with your commands, and, in obedience to them, I am here to learn your will! She shall not think the visit's of my own accord!

(*Aside.*)

Julia. How formal is the gentleman! He'll live to wish he had been less precise! (*Aside.*)

How. Is it your pleasure to express the reason for your order?

Julia. I claim no right to "order," sir; and scarce had ventured a request, save in a case of life and death! The duel which the town discusses—

How. Is like to end—as other topics which amuse the town—in nothing! Your apprehensions, like your friend's, have been misplaced! To her, the explanation has been made already!

Julia. Of course he'll make it now to me:—he can't in courtesy do less! (*Pauses.*) Why does he not go on: or is he waiting for a hint to speak? (*Aside.*) The interest, sir, I feel in what concerns my friend, may warrant curiosity to learn the facts myself!

How. Doubtless, it may: and as Miss Melville is possessed of all I have a right to state, she'll give the knowledge which you seek, but which I may not mention further!

Julia. Can he be laughing at me now? I half suspect he is—the polar bear! (*Aside.*) I thank you for the reference, sir; although it is not needed! There are some persons in the world who can endure suspense, and I am classed with those!

How. Yes, and you're classed with those who can inflict it, too! (*Aside.*)

Julia. And there are others, sir—at least we hear there are—and you perhaps have noticed such—who,

free from pain themselves, can take no thought of grief around! They are but infidels to tears which others shed, while there exists within themselves a single motive for a smile!

How. I'm glad you've heard of such, and ask me to confirm the fact!

Julia. Indeed!

How. Indeed I am! For I have noticed many of that kind, and even worse than those you name!

Julia. Worse!

How. Much worse! Some I have observed, who not only gaze with unconcern upon surrounding grief, but whose delight consists in causing pain!—who play upon the human heart, as though it were an instrument for mere amusement! who, when fatigued—as soon they grow—with harmony and silv'ry sounds, will draw forth sighs, and shrieks, and groans, and call that pastime! It may be *you* have heard, or read of such?

Julia. I have indeed!—but not in history, or authentic works: they're only mentioned in romances, those I've met! (*laughs.*) Still there are hearts, which, like the sad æolian, will answer sighs to every breeze that blows, and then imagine they are swayed by human skill! I can't be sure that this is true; but if it is, those shrieks and groans respond more oft to fancied than to real wrongs!—yet do we pity, more than blame, the misery deplored in such discordant strains! He'll never be in fitter mood to profit by a lesson to a jealous fit! (*Aside.*)

How. Is it a fancied wrong to know the one beloved is false?—to be convinced that while she only smiles on you, she can give more than smiles to strangers!

Julia. It may be that is fancied, too! You may conceive she smiles on you with love, when there is no such meaning in her thoughts! If that is so, you have no right to call her false:—your vanity, not her falsehood is in fault! It may be, too, that the smiles which others get, they are entitled to:—all are not strangers who are strange to you! or, if they are, it still may

be, that those imagined smiles are the mere coinings of a jealous mind, and have existence only there!

How. To make her boldness quite complete, she's only now to take one other step! I'll try if she will go so far! (*Aside.*) Jealousy will fancy much, no doubt, on slender proof; and even on no proof at all: but what the eyes behold must be believed! There can be no deception when the sight attests a fact!

Julia. The senses all may be deceived: but most of all, the sight!

How. She will deny it to my face! (*Aside.*) Should you behold the one beloved reclining in a stranger's arms, you could not deem the picture less than real, or credit argument to prove it mere delusion!

Julia. I'd first be sure he was a stranger, ere I'd venture to condemn! The allusion, sir, is understood: and, if the right to question might be recognised, it would be easy to explain that, which, unexplained, seems strange at present! At proper time the world may know, and will approve, what meets your censure now: till then—if you desire further light—(*Sees CAZADOR entering, c.*)

Enter CAZADOR, c.

How. If I do! Can she imply a doubt of that!

[*Aside, bows affirmatively.*

Julia. The General may give the knowledge which you seek, but which I may not mention further!

[*Laughs, and points to the General.*

How. Confusion! The General here!—and she unblushingly repeating my own words, and laughing in my face! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. That knowledge shall be furnished by to-morrow night: and then we'll end the wonder, and make e'en Mr. Howson smile!

How. You'll deal in magic, then: or 'twill be with rage, too long suppressed! (*Aside.*)

Julia. Make Mr. Howson smile!—impossible! The balance of his days are given to sighs, and shrieks, and

groans! He'd banish smiles to caverns wild, and murder mirth, if it should dare approach!

How. I shall not wait, to let her break her jests on me: but will return again for Lucy's note! (*Aside.*) Miss Everst—I take my leave! General Cazador—your most obedient servant, sir!

[*Going,—bows ceremoniously.*]

Julia. I'm sorry you're in haste! You'll not forget to-morrow night!—the ball you know comes off, and you—

How. I shall remember the engagement, Miss! A pretty dance she'll lead me at the ball!

[*Aside, and exit R.*]

Gen. C. Poor Howson! He thinks he owes me little thanks, and takes no pains to hide his thoughts: while you can smile, like martyred patience, at your fate, and pass, unmurmuring, through the dread ordeal!

Julia. My murmurs are withheld because I see beyond the hour: besides, I am amused in watching Howson's hopes and doubts:—to see him struggle 'gainst his rage! 'Tis fit he learns to master that, before he takes a wife; or some weak woman's got to bear it all! But, uncle, tell me of the duel—is it a fable or a fact? I've heard so much I don't know what to think!

Gen. C. Think it a fable, then; for so 'twill prove:—but do not ask the meaning of it now!

Julia. A mystery! Pray solve it, uncle:—I hate to be in doubt!

Gen. C. Yet have no sympathy for Howson's doubts: that's human nature, though. We must be made to feel ourselves, before we know that others feel! To-morrow all shall be explained—to you and Howson, both!

Julia. Your moral reaches farther than you think! I wonder who it is that keeps his wife in doubt!

Gen. C. Not me, I'm sure! My wife is not in doubt—or has no doubts of me! She thinks that Hunter's in his grave! Her doubts are only of the General;

and he, with your assistance, will soon dispose of those! Where is your aunt?

Julia. I'll take you to her, if you'll go!

Gen. C. Be sure I will!—for I must husband time, or I'll not husband her—not by to-morrow night!

Julia. Then come with me,—and see you play the lover well: while I steal off to Lucy's room, to learn the secret Howson told! (*Going.*)

Gen. C. And then to plot against poor Howson's peace! Well, go along:—he'll turn the tables on you yet!

Julia. He'll get your wife to help him, then:—and turn them by the spirits' aid! [*They exit, laughing, L.*

End of Act III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Street in front of the hotel.*JENNY *discovered at the door.*

Jen. (Looking off, L.) They're off at last! and such a ride they'll have! I hope to goodness, after so much fuss, it won't be all for nothing! Miss Lucy, she's been up all night, and sending all the house in search of Mr. Harry: and now, she takes Miss Julia and a coach, and off she goes to stop the row! What trouble we poor women have about the men:—if they could only know the half! They do—and care no more than if it was their right!

Bak. (Without.) Buy 'em up! Buy 'em up! Fresh roasted peanuts—buy 'em up!

Jen. That man aint got no sense—a-crying peanuts at this time of day! Who wants such things before they're out of bed!

Enter BAKER, R.

Bak. Fresh roasted peanuts, six bits a pint—buy 'em up! Buy some peanuts, Miss? (*Jenny turns.*) Why, cousin Jenny! (*Drops his basket.*) Have I found you out at last? (*Attempts to embrace her.*)

Jen. Stand further off, young man! (*Pushes him from her.*) I can't believe my eyes! It isn't—no, I know it isn't! He's in New York this minute!

Bak. No more than you are in New York, he is! Why, cousin Jenny, don't you know me?

Jen. What—cousin Will!

Bak. Of course its cousin Will! (*They embrace.*) Who should it be but me! I'm so glad to see you, cousin Jenny, I don't know what to do!

Jen. And aint I glad to see you too! (*They embrace again.*) There, that will do—we're in the open streets: and then you squeeze too hard!

Bak. Too hard? Why that aint hard!

Jen. Yes—for the public streets, it is! But who would ever think we'd meet so far from home! And when did you arrive?

Bak. It's a long story, Jenny; too long to tell you now: but I've been here for months—all through the mines, and sick!

Jen. Poor fellow! you might have died, and I not heard a word!

Bak. I only came to town two days ago, and poor: Job's turkeys were well fed to what I was!—but, thanks to Mr. Fairfield, I'm doing well again, and mean to make my everlasting fortune yet!

Jen. What Mr. Fairfield, Will? The merchant here in town?

Bak. You know him, then!

Jen. Know him? I think I do! I see him every day, and sometimes twice a day! But, poor young man! it's over with him now! He's gone this very morning to a fight; and just as like as not he may be killed! The good are always killed, while those the world can spare, remain behind to do more mischief!

Bak. Lord, Jenny, if Mr. Fairfield never dies until he falls by Colonel Bluster's hand, he'll bury all the people in the world, and live till it's burnt up! The duel's all a sham!

Jen. A what? Say that again—do, cousin Will, say that again!

Bak. It's all a sham, I say! I went with Mr. Howson to the store, and overheard the whole—although they little thought that any one was near! “Lord, Jenny, how they laughed at making balls of cork!—“and at the Colonel's fright—if they could get him on “the ground!” Why, bless you! I am going there myself, and on my way!

Jen. (*Musing.*) She can't be very far!

Bak. Who can't be very far?

Jen. (*Turns suddenly to Baker.*) Cousin Will—go get a carriage, straight:—and take me with you to the spot! Don't stare, as if you thought me mad, but do as you are bid!

Bak. Cousin Jenny, you aint siek, I hope! Just let me feel your pulse!

Jen. None of your nonsense, Will; and don't you stop to talk, but go at once! Here, take my purse, and fly! (*Offers her purse.*)

Bak. First tell me what this hurry means!

Jen. When we are in the coach, I will! Don't speak another word, but go! "I'll have my bonnet on, and "shawl, before you can get back!" (*Attempts to push him off.*)

Bak. Was ever such a girl as you!

Jen. (*Pushing him.*) Never!

Bak. Well, let me have one more embrace, and then I'll go!

Jen. There—take your hug and leave! (*They embrace.*)

Enter BARNEY, R. Starts back surprised.

Bar. Murther an' turf! Is it a dthrame I'm in—or is that Jenny, a huggin' up a man?

Jen. If here aint Barney, too!

Bar. She spakes!—it's not a dthrame!

Bak. Of course it's not! but if it had been, I was content to sleep a year!

Jen. Be quiet, Will, and let me tell him who you are!

Bar. Don't spake to me, you Deeeaver! you Hyena! you Crocodile! you Hippopotamus!—don't spake to me!

Jen. Why, Barney!

Bar. Don't Barney me, nor blarney me! Sure it was a washerwoman that you used to want; and now you've got a paynut man!—but I'll spoil his beauty for him, an' crack his ugly head, as if it was the shells of his own paynuts! (*Attempts to cross to Baker—Jenny prevents him.*)

Bak. Don't hold him, Jenny; if he's after cracking heads! There's one upon his shoulders that I'll take a chance at, when he comes this way!

Bar. You will, will you? (*Struggles to get loose from Jenny.*)

Jen. Cousin Will, don't be a fool—but go and get a coach at once!

Bak. I'll do it, Jenny, as I said I would; but if your Irish friend will wait till I come back—

Bar. O, by the powers, but I'll wait!

Bak. Then see you do! I'll come the sooner, thinking you are here! [Exit L.]

Jen. Now aint you, Barney, quite a nice young man, to treat my cousin so!

Bar. Don't cousin me! I know what Californy cousins is, an' Californy widows, too!

Jen. Very well, Mr. Barney! Very well, sir,—since you doubt my word! (*Puts her handkerchief to her eyes, and moves towards the door.*)

Bar. If she aint cryin' now! (*Aside.*) Stay, Jenny! Are you sure the bla'guard is your cousin?

Jen. I've nothing more to tell you than I've told:—not when you ask that way!

Bar. But say it once again, an' I'll believe you now! Is he in thruth your cousin?

Jen. (*Turns to him.*) Of course he is!—my cousin Will, I thought was in New York! But come with me till I get fixed, and you shall learn all that I know myself; and after, go with us to bring Miss Lucy back! (*Going.*)

Bar. Be dad! I'll do that same—an' take a hug for every cruel thought I had!

Jen. You'll ask my leave first, Mr. Barney. (*Runs in c.*)

Bar. Troth an' I won't; for you'd be gettin' mad again, to think I stopped for sich a thrifle! (*Follows her c.*)

SCENE II.—A Wood.

Enter CAZADOR, carrying a pistol case.—BLUSTER and WILKINS, 3 R.

Gen. C. Come, Colonel, move your limbs! We've barely time, with haste, to reach the field!

Blus. General, you hurry up as if 'twas sport we're marching to!

Gen. C. And so it is!—to one of us! (*Aside.*)

Blus. Oh Dear! He calls it sport to take a human life! (*Aside.*) Give me some chance for breath, before I breathe my last! Fairfield can't thirst for blood so much, but that he'll wait awhile! Do you go on—I'll be in plenty time!

Gen. C. See that you are, or look for my return.

(*Going.*)

Blus. General, one word! Is there no hope of some excuse to take that challenge back?

Gen. C. (*Smiles*) There may be, if you show a fearless front, and seem—as every man in such a case should—as eager for the fierce encounter, as a bridegroom for the nuptial kiss! [*Exit L.*]

Willk. Some men are bridegrooms 'gainst their wills, and marry with a pistol at their heads! I don't believe that kind would hanker for the nuptial kiss!

Blus. It's bad enough to be obliged to marry, Tom; but don't begin to equal being forced to fight! Where is that precious friend of yours; and where's the writ he has?

Willk. He's on the ground, perhaps!

Blus. But if he's not! If he don't come at all—what then is to be done? Will you stand by and see this butchery go on?

Willk. Colonel, what can I do? If I should interfere, you'd see a bullet whiz right through my head, and then the fun go on, as coolly as before! If there's no help but fight, you must depend on shooting quick! Soon as you catch the word, just blaze away!

Blus. If only shooting quick would save my neck!—but he may shoot as quick as I! 'Twould be more sure to be arrested first, and under bail to keep the peace!

Willk. You'll be arrested by the General, if we don't take a start! He's coming back, and foaming at the mouth!

Blus. Why did I place my challenge in his hands! He's hungrier than a leech for blood; and has less feeling than a file! (*Walks slowly L.*) I'm walking to my grave, I know I am! “Oh, what a paradise 'twould

“seem, to be imprisoned for a year,—with chains on
“every limb!” [*Aside—they exit, L.*]

SCENE III.—*Another part of the same.*

FAIRFIELD and HOWSON discovered.

Fair. I like your confidence in the result, but mine can't go to that extent! I am prepared to meet the worst; and if I fall—

How. How like a child you talk! If you should fall, I'd pick you up, of course, and put you on your feet again!

Fair. Be serious for a moment, do! and take what may hereafter prove the last request I make! I do not fear to die—have no unmanly thoughts,—yet prudence makes me feel what may occur, despite your buoyant hopes!

How. You think it does! however, 'tis too late to hear your last request! (*Points off R.*) The other side are here!

Enter CAZADOR and BLUSTER, followed by WILKINS, R.
CAZADOR salutes FAIRFIELD and HOWSON—they make formal acknowledgments:—C. and HOWSON then converse apart.

Blus. (Aside to Wilkins.) Tom, look around and find your friend! If ever he was needed it is now!

Wilk. (Aside to Bluster.) Colonel, he's not in sight!

Blus. (To Wilkins.) Then he's a murderer, that's all! See how determined Fairfield looks!

Gen. C. Gentlemen—we toss up for positions! Mr. Howson has already won the word!

How. It will be—as agreed upon—“Fire!—one—two—three!” No trigger to be pulled till “one” is given—none, after the word “three!”

Fair. Let Colonel Bluster choose his ground, and measure then two paces:—anything to expedite affairs!

Blus. (To Wilk.) The blood-thirsty wretch!

Gen. C. (To Fairfield.) We must proceed by rule, and

have full justice done to either side! besides, my principal would not accept the favor which you would concede!

Blus. (Rushes hastily up to Cazador.) Yes, General, I would! Take up his offer, if it gives us any better show:—I will accept of any thing!

Gen. C. (To Bluster.) You will accept, sir, of only what your Second deems consistent with your honor, and his own!

Blus. (Aside.) He is determined I shall fall!

Gen. C. Come, Mr. Howson, shall I toss this coin?

How. Proceed, sir! (*Cazador throws up a coin,*) head!

Gen. C. (Taking it from the ground.) And head it is!

Blus. (To Wilkins.) I knew it would be head? Why didn't it turn tail?

Wilk. (Aside.) If they don't hurry up, you'll be for turning tail!

Gen. C. Now we proceed to measure off two paces from this stake! (*Measures two paces from where Fairfield stands.*)

Blus. (Rushes up to Cazador.) General—what in creation's name are you about?

Gen. C. Stand aside, Colonel Bluster! I am measuring the distance!

Blus. You don't call those paces, General:—those little steps!

Gen. C. Yes, sir; and good paces, too!

Blus. They'd hardly pass for women's steps!—but for a fighting pace—General, you should spread yourself! You know we have but two!

How. (Steps the ground.) The distance is correct! Now, Fairfield, take your ground!

Fair. It is already taken! I'll stand just where I am!

How. General Cazador, we are prepared, and wait for you, and for your friend!

Gen. C. We're ready, sir! (*To Bluster.*) Now, Colonel, take your place! (*Puts him in position two paces from Fairfield.*)

Blus. (Aside to Wilkins.) Tom, is there no officer yet

in sight? (*Wilkins shakes his head.*) Have you examined on the hill—where all those people stand? (*Points off the stage.*)

Wilk. (*To Bluster.*) Colonel, there's not the slightest signs of one!

Blus. Oh Lord! what shall I do!

Wilk. You must remember what I said, and fire quick!

Blus. (*Aside.*) I'd like to fire now—before they give the word!

How. Gentlemen, take your weapons! and bear in mind the terms!—no shot till “one” is called; nor any after “three!” (*Takes a pistol from case and places it in Fairfield's hand, then retires a few steps—standing between the combatants.*)

Gen. C. (*Does the same for Bluster.*) Here, Colonel, is your weapon! (*Retires to where Howson stands.*)

How. Gentlemen!—are you ready?

Fair. } (*Together.*) { Ready!

Blus. } { No! I aint ready yet! (*With great trepidation.*)

Gen. C. (*Approaches Bluster.*) What is the trouble, Colonel Bluster?

Blus. General, can't this thing be stopped?

Gen. C. No, sir! not until a shot's exchanged!

Blus. General, that shot will lay me out a corpse!

Gen. C. And if it does—your honor still will live!

Blus. (*Aside.*) There's consolation! Sink my honor! or blaze away at it all day, if you will only let me live! “It's no use talking, though: I've got to fight; and “Fairfield may look out for squalls!”

How. Gentlemen—are you ready?

Fair. (*Promptly.*) Ready!

Blus. (*Aside.*) It must be said! Ready!

How. Fire! (*Before Howson says “one,” Bluster raises and fires—gives a hasty glance at Fairfield, then makes a movement as if selecting a direction for flight! Murmur of voices heard without, which keeps on increasing. Howson and Cazador rush up to Fairfield.*)

Fair. (*Examines the breast of his coat.*) He fired before the word!

How. Shame on the coward! shame!

Blus. (*Anxiously.*) I've settled him: and now must give the crowd leg-bail! (*Rushes off R. Murmur of voices heard, as if in pursuit.*)

Willk. Hold your horses, Colonel! there aint no damage done! (*Goes after him, R. As he attempts to rush after him, encounters Baker (who enters R.), whom he upsets—then exits R.*)

Bak. (*Rising.*) That rascal Wilkins, as I hope to live! Now to trip up his heels! Stop thief! stop thief!

[*Exit, running, L.*

Gen. C. (*To Fairfield.*) I knew you were not hurt, or I should have shot him down myself!

Fair. No thanks to Colonel Bluster for that fact! He had the best intentions!

Gen. C. The rascal! I'll after him, and bring him back. [*Exit R.*

Fair. 'Twas murder—nothing less—he meant!

How. Had you been killed, he would have found his spirit, charged with latest news, in hot pursuit of yours! But come along—I'll tell you, as we walk along, the reason of your safety! (*Takes up pistol case.*)

Fair. That story tells itself! The Colonel missed his mark, and so I still survive! But does he run no risk? The people are indignant at the act!

How. O, never fear for him! His nimble heels will save his empty head! (*Going.*)

Fair. I'll let him have the benefit of my shot, to stimulate his flight! (*Fires his pistol in the air, and they exit laughing, R.*)

SCENE IV.—*Another part of the same.*

Enter JULIA and LUCY, hurriedly, R.

"*Julia.* Mercy! What was the meaning of that dreadful noise?

"*Lucy.* Oh, Julia—I shall die! The meaning is, the duel has been fought, and Harry killed!

"*Julia.* Why, Lucy! What a thought! (*Passes her arm round Lucy's waist.*)

"*Lucy.* It is the horrid truth! Why did we pause

“before the spot was reached! I should have thrown myself before the murderer’s arm, and interposed my life to save the man I loved! He’s dead! I know he is!”

“*Julia.* Dear Lucy, be composed! You start at phantoms which you raise yourself!”

Enter JENNY, hastily, L.

Jen. Oh, dear! I’m out of breath, and nigh to drop—I’ve run so fast! but I have seen it all—from first to last!

Julia Then tell us quickly what you’ve seen! Who fired that shot we heard?

Lucy. Speak, Jenny!—is my Harry dead?

“*Jen.* Lord bless you, Miss!—no more than you—unless he’s killed with fun! I saw that Colonel Bluster miss, and run away:—he’d beat a locomotive, Colonel Bluster would!”

“*Lucy.* Thank heaven for that!”

“*Julia.* And so say I!—for Fairfield’s safety, and the Colonel’s speed! (*Laughs.*) Jenny, proceed, and tell your story out!”

Jen. First, then, Miss Julia—(*Shouts heard without.*) Good gracious me! they’re coming right this way!

Julia. Let’s step aside till they have passed! “The shade is thicker here (*points R.*), and may suffice to shield us from their gaze!” Come, Lucy! Jenny, follow us! [*They exit U. E. R.*]

Enter BLUSTER, hurriedly and out of breath, L.

Blus. Curse on the yelping hounds! they’re off the track at last! (*Pants*) “I wonder if he’s wounded in a vital place! The aim was plumb against his breast: but yet he didn’t fall, or budge an inch, before the crowd began to rush at me!” Hang ’em! what right had they to interfere—I didn’t shoot at them! Did they suppose I went out to be killed! (*Shouts without—he looks hurriedly around.*) They’re on the scent again! footsteps, too! then I must try another heat! I’ll balk you yet, my boys! (*Runs off, R.*)

“ *Enter* WILKINS, L.

“ *Willk.* Stay, Colonel! don’t you know your friends!
“ The fool is off again; and I’m just fool enough to fol-
“ low him. *Exit*, R.

“ *Enter* BAKER, *running*, L.

“ *Bak.* Here, Wilkins—rogue and thief! hold up,
“ and give a man a chance! (*Going.*)

“ JENNY *advances.*

“ *Jen.* Stop, Cousin Will, you’re past the place!

“ *Bak.* I hav’nt time to talk!—a rascal is in sight
“ who must be lodged in jail! (*Runs off* R.)

“ *Jen.* Oh dear, he’s off; and here are people coming
“ still! What can be keeping Barney? [*Exit* R.

Enter FAIRFIELD and HOWSON, L. U. E.

“ *How.* You felt the bullet, then?

“ *Fair.* Felt it! I think I did—although it was of
“ cork! (*Laughs.*) It was a great relief to know my
“ coat was only soiled!

“ *How.* There will be more than soiling coats when
“ Cazador and I go out!

“ *Fair.* You’ll not go out, with my consent! There
“ are no grounds for that!

“ *How.* No grounds!—but I’ll be cool, and keep my
“ rage for him! What would you say had it been Lucy
“ in his arms? No grounds, indeed! I like the way
“ you talk!

“ *Fair.* You have no claim to Julia’s love, but only
“ bare surmise! How will you build a cause from that?”

“ *How.* I’ll find a cause, apart from that, on which to
bring him out!

“ *Fair.* Poor, love-sick youth!

“ *How.* I would not marry now that cold coquette, not
if her charms were multiplied, and she could own, in
her own right, the hidden wealth of all our golden
hills! But yet the General shall not hold his triumph
long, nor flaunt it in my sight!

“ *Fair.* Don’t nurse your wrath too soon! His ex-

planation may suffice; nor have you long to wait for that!

How. He has no explanation!—none that's fit to name, or he had given it on the spot! But, as you say, it is not long to wait! We'll meet him at the ball to-night, and then—we're either friends, or foes!

Fair. Friends, let us hope: and so return to town! My Lucy's mind must be relieved at once: I owe her that, at least!

How. The news will reach her ere we get to town: be not concerned at that; but turn your thoughts to framing some excuse to merit favor at your hands! She'll hold you to a strict account for all your truant tricks!

Fair. Her joy, at finding me unhurt, will be so great, I shall not need excuse! My peace is made before I even sue!

How. Don't be too sure! She'll make you put the sackcloth on, and pour upon your head the ashes of her wrath! Women are either tyrants, or coquettes; and some, I know, are both!

Fair. You're sadly out of sorts with all the sex: and, like a boy who's chanced upon one sour grape, are ready to exclaim, the vine yields no sweet fruit!

How. The man who's poisoned eating fruit, may be excused for touching it no more! Nor would he look for wholesome fruit, where he had seen the hemlock grow!

Fair. O sage conclusion for a sober mind! Because your fingers once are scorched, no heat allures you more! But come with me, and learn to change your creed! You'll see how gentle Lucy is, and patient, in her ardent love!

How. I've little faith in miracles; yet will I go to see a wonder proved!

Fair. Come, then, and be convinced! You'll not remain an infidel to what your sight attests! (*Going.*)

How. I almost wish I could!—"and doubt the gorgeous sight which broke a happy dream!" [*They exit R.*]

LUCY, JULIA, and JENNY advance.

Lucy. Julia, 'tis just as Jenny said:—the duel was a paltry farce! You heard him laugh, and say the bullet was of cork!

Julia. The story is confirmed as well by Fairfield's "present language, as by Howson's previous hints! "With Howson's knowledge, and the General's, 'tis "not a marvel that they could predict a happy issue "to the fight!

Lucy. And yet I'm glad that I restrained myself; "else had he learned too soon I'm not so weak a thing "as he describes! He'd think me weak, indeed, if he "could know a tithe of what he's made me feel, or "what I've done, to save a life that never has been "risked!"

Julia. It would have been a happy jest—"though "not discreet"—had we confronted him! I had the thought, as well as you, and longed to see them stare, and have them know we'd overheard their flattering thoughts!

Lucy. Flattering! to be thought a child! without the sense of what one owes oneself, or feeling to resent affront! "You'll know how gentle Lucy is, and "patient, in her ardent love!" Why let him bring his friend and learn! He'll wish he'd made the visit by himself, when I announce all other ties than friendship, at an end!

Julia. You'll not do that!

Lucy. I will!

Julia. You think you will! "but if you do, you'll "speedily relent, and take the youth once more to "grace!"

Lucy. "No, Julia," I never will forgive him! never!

Julia. So speaks indignant love! and so I feel towards Fairfield's friend! He dares to give me ugly names, and has a lexicon prepared for my especial use! I am "a heartless jilt," and "cold coquette!" Nor does he stop at that,—but glibly calls me poisoned fruit, and sees the deadly hemlock grow where'er I chance to stand: and would not wed me for a diamond world!

We'll see how well he keeps his word, or who'll refuse to wed! (*Crosses.*)

Jen. La, Miss, the men don't mean not half they say, when they get raving mad! Barney said quite as much to me to-day—"before he knew who cousin Will could be; but when he did, he called himself a goose," and played such tricks, I thought he'd lost his wits!

Julia. And so he has, or lost his way; and that is quite as bad! You'll have to find him out, or we may wait till night, and then, go home afoot!

Lucy. He's coming now! (*Points R.*)

Julia. 'Tis well he is! Let's meet the coach! (*Going.*) Jenny, be dumb about our morning ride!

[*Exit R. Julia and Lucy.*]

Jen. O, Miss, I'll be as secret as the grave! and Barney, too!

[*Exit R.*]

SCENE V.—*A street in San Francisco.*

Citizens. (*Without.*) Bring him along! Bring him along!

Enter BAKER, GEE HO, and CITIZENS, with WILKINS in custody.

Citiz. Bring him along! Bring him along!

Wilk. I tell you, boys, the man's mad! I never saw him in my life!

Bak. Oh, no! You never worked the mines with me, or got my hard earned gold, in payment for a salted claim; then ran away, to save your worthless neck!

Wilk. You're right—I never did!—and never saw you till to-day!

Bak. Your name aint Wilkins either, I suppose! You'd best deny yourself, and claim to be some other rogue!

Wilk. I'd like to tell you who I am, and write my name between your eyes, with this here pen and ink! (*Holds up his fists.*) But have your wish—we'll see if you, or I, will prove the rogue!

Bak. We will; and after, see you put in jail! Bring him along—to Justice Grabim's Court.

Citiz. Bring him along! Bring him along! (*They take hold of him, and, after a scuffle, he shakes them off.*)

Wilk. Keep your hands off—I'll go alone! (*To Baker.*) You've had you're day, young man! He's trapped himself, and goes before the court I own! Grabim can't say his soul's his own, excepting with my leave!
[*Aside,—they exit tumultuously, L.*]

SCENE VI.—*Grabim's Court-room.*

Furnished with an old table, a barrel for the Judge's bench, and some boxes and boards for seats.—GRABIM discovered smoking a pipe and walking up and down.

Citiz. (*Without.*) Bring him along! Here's Justice Grabim's Court!

Grab. There's music to my ears! The cases will keep rolling in: and don't I make 'em pay!—"Just let those try it on who think I don't!"

Citiz. Bring him along! Bring him along!

Grab. Let's take a squint what this is like to be! (*Looks out L.*) A crowd—Pshaw! only some fighting in the street, or some poor devil shot or stabbed!—Stay! who have we here?—Wilkins, as sure as fun! What's he been doing now, to get into a scrape? No matter what:—if he is in, I am the boy to help him out: he knows too much, about election time, to disoblige! Some king of France talked big, that he was France, but let Tom have the ballot-box, and he could easy say that much, and only boast the truth! He is the people—when he makes returns! (*Noise of feet without.*) Well, here they come!—Let Justice mount her throne, and show her fancy frills!

[*Takes a seat theatrically on the barrel.*]

Enter BAKER, L.

Bak. (*Speaks to those without.*) This is the Court! Take care he don't escape!

Enter WILKINS, GEE HO, and Citizens, L.

Wilkins nods familiarly to Grabim, who returns the salutation significantly, and lays his finger to his nose.

Wilk. It's all right!—we'll give this fool a dose!
(*Aside.*) Take care who don't escape? (*To Baker.*) Take care you don't sneak off yourself, before you make your charge! If honest men can't walk the streets in peace, let's have no humbug law!

Bak. Such honest men as you, should *make*, not walk, the streets!—and then have chains upon their legs; and men, with whips, to see them do the work!

Grab. Keep order in the Court! Is this a den of thieves, or bar-room, for your drunken sprees!—or do we hold a court of law—of legal law—where justice sits, and men should pay respect! “Have reverence for the place, and me, or, as I live by fees, I'll put you where you'll keep the peace!” Say, Tom, my boy, is that the time of day? (*Aside to Wilkins.*)

Wilk. It is, old Brick!—if I know what's o'clock!
(*Aside.*) I beg your pardon, Judge, if I aint paid respect: but when a man's abused—“when crazy men arrest him on the streets, and drag him through the town,” he feels it rather hard, and has excuse if he lets slip a hasty word!

Bak. There's law for taking thieves, no matter where they're found! Whether while salting claims, or when the job is done!

Grab. Silence, young man, and don't expound the law! That's usurpation which I shan't permit! What should you know about the law?

Bak. I ought to know: I've been a lawyer's clerk!

Grab. Silence, I say! No lawyer, nor his clerk, shall teach the law to me! Dare you presume to know as much as I? The laws, young man, are nothing in themselves! They're only words, until we give their sense: and have no sense, but what we choose to give—no matter what the legislature means! Who brings this case? (*Pompously.*)

Wilk. There aint no case! This fellow—that I never saw—gasses about some gold I took from him in payment for a salted claim! Now, if I did, he's got the claim, and wants the money, too! Is that the law; or, is it right, or just?

Grab. Of course it aint! There's nothing plainer in the books than that!

Bak. I haven't got the claim; and never had! It was no claim at all; and only was a false pretence!

Grab. (*Pompously.*) We'll hear the evidence—since you insist—but give you no opinion yet about the law points in the case!

Wilk. Why, Judge!

Grab. Be quiet, Tom, and let me earn my fee! (*Aside to Wilkins.*) Young man, go on, and bring a witness up!

Bak. (*Leads Gee Ho out.*) Gee Ho—you take the stand! He worked with Wilkins, in the mines, and saw him salt the claim!

Grab. Witness, be sworn! (*Gee Ho steps up to the table.*) But first we'll take your name!

Gee Ho. Me name Gee Ho:—me work for Mellikin man, in claim!

Wilk. Here, Mellikin man—you stop! You aint a witness yet; and can't be, in this little State!

Bak. I'd like to know the reason why he can't?

Grab. He comes from China; that's enough—if Wilkins makes objection on that ground!

Wilk. Judge—you bet I do!

Grab. Well, then, Gee Ho?

Gee Ho. Yes!

Grab. You may gee up, and go! You'll not be wanted any more!

Gee Ho. Mellikin man belly good—belly good!

[*Retires gesticulating.*]

Wilk. That ends the case!

Bak. No, that don't end the case! "I've got a witness that you can't refuse! I've got myself!" Judge—swear me, if you please!

Wilk. What—in the case you’ve brought yourself? Call up Gee Ho; he’ll teach you better law than that! You must get up and git!

Bak. I shan’t get up and git! “I have no interest in the case, no more than any one who’s not concerned!” I’ve been a lawyer’s clerk, and know what’s English common law!

Wilk. Would you insult the Judge? (*Turns to Grabim.*) He dares to offer *common* law! Yes, Judge, he offers *common* law; and *English* common law, at that!

Grab. We’ll have the best that can be found! No *common* law for California courts! but least of all, the *English* common law! We’ve whipped the English twice, (*to Baker,*) yes, sir, we’ve whipped ’em twice! and shall we take our laws from them? The case is ended, and the man discharged!—You, Baker, pay the costs!

Citiz. Three cheers for Justice Grabim!

[*They cheer.*]

Bak. Discharge a rogue, and put the costs on me! You shouldn’t have a red, if I was made of gold!—but, as I haven’t got a dime—

Grab. To prison with him till he pays the costs! We’ll teach you how to trifle with the Court!

Citiz. To prison with him! To prison with him!

Bak. Just stop your noise, and let me speak!

Grab. I will not hear a word—until the costs are paid! Justice can’t starve, because you’re out of funds! (*Rises.*) Away with him to prison, boys! I’ll fill a warrant up and send it after you! Wilkins, you see it done; and come and let me know when he’s locked up!

[*Exit R.*]

Wilk. (*Placing his hand on Baker’s shoulder.*) Come, sir; you move; or else we’ll help you on!

Bak. (*Shakes him off.*) I will not stir a step, until I choose to go; so right about, and leave, yourself!

Wilk. (*To Citizens.*) Come, boys! Up with him on your shoulders, till we find a rail! He’s not so heavy as he talks—by twenty thousand pounds!

Citiz. Bring him along! Bring him along! (*They pick Baker up—he struggling all the time violently.*)

Bak. Tom Wilkins, you shall smart for this!

Citiz. Bring him along! Bring him along!

[*All exit, struggling, L.*

End of Act IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Private parlor in the hotel.*

Enter JULIA and LUCY—dressed for the ball, L.

Julia. And has he not appeased you yet? Out on “the silly man! Where was his penitence for past offence, and protestation for all time to come!

Lucy. I’ve heard of both, and struggled ’gainst a “traitorous heart, which—spite of outraged pride—“would plead his cause; yet treated him with only “cold respect!”

Julia. “The struggle ’gainst your traitorous heart “will be continued till that gains the day!” Pride makes a grand parade, but it must yield in such unequal fight!

Lucy. Perhaps your pride would yield!

Julia. Perhaps it would!—and so will yours; and also aunt’s—if hers should take alarm, when she discovers who the General is!

Lucy. Your aunt may conquer pride, and feign belief in all her husband condescends to say, “because their fates are linked for life!” but for myself—I still am free; and will not be content with even love; unless I also have respect!

Julia. How stately does that sound! Won’t you have reverence, and veneration, too? Why, what a starched old maid you’d make!—and what a prim and formal thing you’d have a lover be! He’d never sigh, except by rule, or with a tuning fork, to give his voice its pitch!

Lucy. Not quite so bad as that!

Julia. Yes, quite as bad, and worse! He’d never dare to speak: but if he should; his words would be as cold and hard, as though thrown off from solid rock, and carved on tombstones to be fit for use! Be such your fancy, if you like! I’ll have a man of flesh and blood:

(*crosses*.) nor shall he hold me in such great respect, but that he'll sometimes try a jest at my expense; which, if I can't return upon the spot, I'll bear with smiles, and bide my time to pay it back!

Enter MRS. HUNTER and CAZADOR, L.

Mrs. H. What's that my niece is going to pay! and who's the all-important "he"!

Lucy. The all-important "he" seems but a fancy sketch—a beau ideal of a beau! The happy swain has not been named, who owns the outline Julia drew!

Julia. The happy swain has neither name, nor lineage, nor estate! He's but a floating thought—a fairy cloud—which may, or not, desert its present sphere, and fall to mother earth!

Gen. C. It will be sure to fall: and when it does, you'll find it kneeling at your feet! I have a shrewd suspicion, too, that "thought or cloud," wears pantaloons and boots!

Lucy. Oh, shocking! (*Laughs.*)

Mrs. H. (*To Lucy.*) Why so?—those are the proper garments for a man! Pray, General, for Julia's sake, condense that cloud, and make it take a bridegroom's form!

Julia. Don't be malignant, aunt! and, General, spare your skill! (*Crosses to him.*) I have no wish to go through life in chains! Are you accepted yet? (*Aside to Cazador.*)

Gen. C. (*Aside to Julia.*) Not yet! but shall be, or rejected, ere we leave this room!

Mrs. H. Julia, you've no idea of wedded life, to call it one of chains! but if it is, they're chains you love to wear, and made of purest gold! (*Takes Cazador's arm.*)

Julia. No, aunt: be sure they're only gilt! A month or two will take the burnish off! But gold, or gilt; when I conclude to wed, no friend shall make a match for me: I'll choose the groom myself!

Lucy. Say rather, Julia, that the choice is made!

"Gen. C. So says our little social world!—and adds,

"you're safely caged, although you imitate the eagle's
"scream, and think to reach the sun!

"*Julia.* How full of pretty tropes you are: of cages,
"birds, and suns! I know no cage; nor do my soaring
"wings encounter bars, let me fly ne'er so high!

"*Lucy.* Perhaps the bird conceives no wish to speed
"beyond its bounds!

"*Mrs. H.* Young Howson is the cage the General
"means; and him she sees, whether she soars in clouds
"above, or skims along the ground!

"*Julia.* (*Pettishly.*) You think so, aunt!

"*Mrs. H.* I know so, niece!"

Gen. C. He's jealous, too, and soon will clip her
eager wings, and keep them shorn, until they move
obedient to his will!

Julia. The man has not been born who'll clip my
wings! and for the one that's named—You'll see us at
the ball to-night, and see whose wings are shorn! He
takes a lofty flight, just now, and overstays his time!
anon he'll tumble to the earth, and beat his pinions on
the ground, and fill the air with cries!

Lucy. While you will gently raise his prostrate form,
and, with caressing words, will change his plaintive
cries to nuptial songs!

Mrs. H. That's what she'll do:—and then they'll
make a concert with their nuptial songs! I can fore-
tel it all!

Julia. (*Archly.*) You've been consulting with the spi-
rits, aunt!

Mrs. H. (*Gravely.*) Julia!

Julia. You have: you know you have! But if their
knowledge of my future fate is not more sure than
what they've told of yours—

Mrs. H. Don't speak in such a vein of serious things!
There's more than you believe, or can explain, in what
the spirits say!—all that they've told to me has come
to pass! (*Turns to Lucy in earnest conversation.*)

Gen. C. (*Aside to Julia.*) Then, Julia, I've no busi-
ness here—at least not in the flesh—since they report
me *very* dead!

Julia. (*Aside to Cazador.*) Perhaps you are defunct, and do not know the fact!

"Mrs. H. (*To Lucy.*) When I see tables standing "in the air, and no one near but me—(*Julia and Lucy laugh.*) Why, girls, what makes you laugh? 'Twas "only yesterday I sat in Lucy's room, and saw her "table bound from off the floor, and felt it strike my "hand, with force, as it kept mounting up!" There was no living soul about, but only I alone!

Julia. No, aunt; not you alone!

Lucy. "You were an unexpected guest, and so surprised a lover's *tete a tete*, the gentleman could not "escape in time, and therefore sought the only refuge "near!" Had you but raised the table-cloth you might have seen a most substantial form! (*All laugh except Mrs. Hunter.*)

Mrs. H. I'm petrified!

Enter JENNY, c.

Jen. The gentlemen are in the parlor, Miss!

Lucy. Say that we're coming down! (*Going.*)

[*Exit Jenny.*]

Julia. One moment, Lucy! Come, aunt; confess before we go, that tables only dance—when there is music underneath! (*Laughs.*)

Mrs. H. (*Pettishly.*) Confess you are a silly child!

Julia. I may do even that; when you admit your faith's a jest! [*Exit, laughing, Julia and Lucy, c.*]

Mrs. H. That Julia is the wildest girl in town!

Gen. C. (*Places chairs.*) She'll sober down with years; and may, in time, become as gentle as her lovely aunt!

Mrs. H. (*Sits.*) Oh, General, you'll make me vain, if you pay compliments like those! I hope he means to take advantage of this chance! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. Now to cut out my other self! (*Aside.*) No fear, dear Mrs. H., of your becoming vain! I only speak the modest truth; to which you can't object!

Mrs. H. You've learned my weakness, General, and know I can't object to anything you say! It's no great harm to lead him to the point! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. 'Tis now my turn to blush! (*Aside—sits.*) How kind of you to say so much; and kinder still the sacrifice you make to let me taste my present bliss!

Mrs. H. (Tenderly.) What sacrifice is that, dear General, you mean!

Gen. C. The ball room and its charms!—"the laughing eyes, the merry hearts, the lively chat, and all "those nameless pleasures which change delight to "rapture!"

Mrs. H. Those pleasures are deferred, not lost: but if they were, their absence may be spared, while you are near! There's more enjoyment to congenial hearts in quiet conversation, than in all the whirl a ball room can present!

Gen. C. How like myself you think! (*Takes her hand.*) 'Tis sweeter far to me to sit, as we now sit, (*puts his arm around her waist,*) in sweet communion of the soul, than it would be to promenade in dazzling courts, or lead an empress through the mazy dance! If she can swallow that, the victory is won! (*Aside—Mrs. H. sighs.*) Why do you sigh?

Mrs. H. (Sighs again.) I cannot help but sigh: you men have such deceitful ways!

Gen. C. Some men may have, but I can claim no kindred with that sort! (*Mrs. H. sighs.*) Nay, do not sigh in disbelief: I have the power to prove my words!

Mrs. H. It's almost out: I feel as nervous as a child! (*Aside.*) That's what the sex all say; and, by such honeyed words, ensnare our timid hearts!

Gen. C. (Tenderly.) Have I ensnared that timid heart!

Mrs. H. (With affected modesty.) Have mercy on a woman's weakness! Dear General, do not ask!

Gen. C. I must, sweet Mrs. H., both ask, and have you answer me! for mine I own is gone, quite lost, and fled to you! Have I ensnared that little timid heart?

Mrs. H. (Lays her head on his shoulder.) You have indeed! Indeed you have!

Gen. C. Now Hunter's nose is out of joint! (*Aside.*)

Enter JENNY, C.

Jen. (Starts.) My eyes, but aint that fun: and what a chance to pay her back! *(Aside.)* Upon my word, good people, you're monstrously affectionate! *(Laughs—Mrs. H. screams, and rises hastily.)*

Mrs. H. I wish that girl had been born blind! *Aside—Jenny continues to laugh.)* Jenny! Why, Jenny—do you dare!

Jen. I beg your pardon, ma'am: I could'nt help it—not to save my life! And it was only what you said to me and Barney, ma'am!

Gen. C. (Smiles.) Get out of the room, you baggage! Out with you, fast as you can run!

Jen. I will, sir: right away! I only came to let you know the coach is at the door! That makes us even now! *[Aside and exit laughing, L.]*

Mrs. H. I'm overwhelmed with strange emotions, and so confused, dear General, by that intrusive girl, you really must excuse me for a while—a little while—to calm my fluttered nerves!

Gen. C. Rest on my arm, and let me lead you to your room! *(Puts his arm around her waist.)*

Mrs. H. (Leans on him.) Oh, what relief this is! *(Going.)* You'll not be angry at my leaving you?

Gen. C. Not angry, dear; but grieved, because you're indisposed! I have the greater reason to expect your anger towards myself!

Mrs. H. Angry with you, dear General!—impossible! Nothing that you might say, or do, could make me angry now!

Gen. C. Nothing, dear widow!—are you quite sure of that?

Mrs. H. Quite sure! *(hesitates,)* unless you are a married man!

Gen. C. I swear—*(she checks him)* by your sweet self—I have no other wife than you!

Mrs. H. Then nothing in the world can make me angry now!

Gen. C. I'm forced, yet fear, to put that bold assertion to the test! *[Aside—they exit affectionately, L.]*

SCENE II.—*Bluster's room—containing a wardrobe, table, and chair.*

Enter BAKER and Policeman, L.

[*After they have searched the room, Baker opens the door of the wardrobe.*]

Bak. You've got the writ? (*Policeman shows it.*) That's well! Now step in here and wait!

Poli. You think he won't resist?

Bak. What if he does!—we're two to one, and armed! (*Policeman goes in the wardrobe.*) We'll have him safe enough this time—confound his brazen face!

Poli. We'll have him, if he comes!

Bak. (*Listens.*) He's coming now—there's footsteps on the stairs! (*Goes in the wardrobe.*)

Enter BLUSTER and WILKINS, L.

Blus. (*Sits himself.*) There's no use talking, Tom:—you would have done the same yourself! It was a sixty pounder in his hand—with barrel big enough to swallow up my body, boots and all! How could I help but shoot!

Wilk. (*Sits.*) Well, let it pass! You'll have to leave the town!

Blus. I have a sort of notion, Tom, you're right: and still don't like to go, till Fairfield is paid back!

Wilk. Then burn the town, if you don't want to go! Just put a match to-night to Fairfield's store, and let the flames run riot where they will!

Blus. Not for the world! That would be worse than shooting quick! But yet, I swear he shan't escape me quite!

Wilk. As for that other thing—

Blus. The Sandwich Island plan?

Wilk. That won't begin to do! You're not the man to lead a crowd: and even if you was: we've not a single ship!

Blus. Let's have the crowd, and make them take the

ships! You stir 'em up, and who'll prevent our building up a grand Kanaka State! A little gas, about "the Stars and Stripes," and "Freedom's March," and then the thing is fixed! Why, Tom, some talking chaps could start the Yankee boys to pull the moon down, by her horns!

Wilk. There's fools enough for anything: but that's no reason you and I should lose our precious wits! There may be something in the scheme; and if there is, our burning down the town won't set it back a speck:—'twill make so many desperate men to jump at any hook that offers bread!

Blus. Now don't insist on burning down the town!

Baker and Policeman, with drawn pistols, stealthily approach.

Wilk. I will! There's money to be made at that, and not a soul to know who did the deed!

Bak. (Seizes Bluster and presents the pistol at his head: Policeman does the same to Wilkins.) Oh, won't they, though! *(Bluster and Wilkins attempt to rise.)* Don't either of you dare to stir; for if you do, you're gone to kingdom come!

Blus. (To Baker.) Take all we've got, good Mr. man, if you come here to rob!

Wilk. If they come *here* to rob! He'd rob you in a church—that Baker would—and in the midst of prayers!

Poli. (To Wilkins.) Come, sir, dry up! I've got a warrant here for you!

Bak. (To Bluster.) And so have I for you, my lively chap!—a leaden one that's quicker than your legs!

Blus. For heaven's sake remove that thing!—it might go off itself! Point it at Wilkins, if you like, I won't attempt to stir!

Bak. Now aint you both a precious pair! You'll burn the city down! *(Shakes Bluster.)* and Fairfield shan't escape! O you outrageous scamps!

Wilk. You overheard us then; and took in earnest what we meant for fun!

Blus. Is that what brings them here? Why, bless your silly souls, it all was only fun! No more than sport, 'twixt Tom and I, to pass away the time!

Bak. Sport, was it!—to burn the city down! We've had such fun before, and couldn't see the joke! Take them before the Mayor! (*To Policeman.*) No Justice Grabim now shall serve their turn!

Poli. I'll take 'em both! You come behind and see they don't escape! (*Takes hold of Bluster and Wilkins, and going.*)

Bak. Drive on! I'll make a hole through him who tries to run, a horse and cart would turn in, and come out! (*Bluster turns, as if to escape, but encounters Baker's leveled pistol. He then exits with Policeman and Wilkins.*) This comes of salting claims! 'Tis but a step from that, to burning cities down! (*Exit L.*)

SCENE III.—*A Drawing-room communicating with a ball-room. Music heard, and waltzers seen crossing the room.*

Enter JULIA and HOWSON, c.—She takes a seat.

How. You're not fatigued, I trust? (*Coldly.*)

Julia. Who would not be fatigued—with walking up and down? You are the dullest man was ever at a ball; and might be dumb, for aught you have to say!

How. (*Sullenly.*) Is silence then a sin? If so, I own myself at fault! 'Tis clear she seldom sins that way!

[*Aside.*

Julia. Why then repent!—it is a sin—against both time and place! Why don't you dance, or tell me something new? You're not gallant to-night!

How. Nor are you complimentary!

Julia. How can I be—with such a sullen man? He shall not learn the secret until uncle comes! (*Aside.*)

How. It would be something new, and strange, if I should say a constant woman had been found! But such a tale would be romance, and no more true, than

if I said the dead had come to life! She's not attempted to explain!—'twas all a shallow trick! (*Aside.*)

Julia. Such things have happened, sir, in olden time, and may occur again! The sea has given back its dead!

How. Yes, once—in Jonah's case:—and through the medium of a philanthropic whale! That chanced two thousand years ago, and may be true; although a modern whale would strangle, trying Jonah's leg! There's no report, of recent date, that names a woman of unchanging love, or dead men brought to life!

Julia. 'Twould be some credit to your sex, to find as many civil men, as there are constant hearts in ours! There was a time such charge had been unjust:—a time when gallant knights would gladly die, defending woman's fame!—and when such knights wore courtesy, the proudest of their plumes! Alas, alas! that race has dwindled down!

How. It should have been extinct ere this! 'Tis too quixotic for degenerate days! Yet still I stand rebuked, e'en though I had no wish to speak—until you urged me on!

Julia. A lame excuse for most discourteous words! (*Rises.*) You must be dumb, or wound a lady's ear! You've been to school, and might have mentioned what you got by rote, of Latin, Greek, or French! 'Twere better so than using spiteful thoughts! Or, failing even that, you might have spoken of the ball—told me the ladies which you like the best; and criticized their forms, their features, and their dress—that, would be apropos! But you must travel very far to find a subject best forgot! You have not named the dance to-night, or claimed me for a waltz! He's pinioned to the stake, and must be tortured, to be cured! (*Aside.*)

How. I shall not dance to-night! The music's out of tune and time, and seems a compound made from Chinese gongs and creaking doors; jewsharps and penny flutes!

Julia. Your ear, and not the music's out of tune! You've danced to worse, a hundred times, and thought it quite divine!

How. Perhaps I have; and yet can't think so now! Our feelings give the form to facts; and what imagination paints, is real, till the dream has passed! I used to love to dance; yet now its grace has fled; and, looking on, I see but men and women bobbing up and down, like crazy Turks in mosques, or shaking quakers at their prayers! I hate the dance! That's strong enough to let her know she does not dance with me!

(Aside.)

Julia. You do!

How. I do!

Julia. And so do I!—the country dance, or plain quadrille! But for the waltz—the sylph-like waltz—where you must float in air, and feel like whirling stars revolving round the sun, amidst the music of the spheres! You surely don't hate that?

How. I hate that worst of all! There's nothing sylph-like in a hop, or jump; and as to floating through the air:—'tis more like Pilgrim's progress up the hill! The Pilgrim gets the worst of that! He drops his load of sin before his dance is through! *(Aside.)*

Julia. *(With mock seriousness.)* Then you are changed indeed! Why what a life of gloom you'll have! Your thoughts don't run on suicide, I hope? You do not linger round apothecary shops, looking with wistful gaze for arsenic, strichnine, or for prussic acid!

How. *(Petulantly.)* Pshaw!

Julia. I'm glad you don't; I'm very glad:—and so may let you go! You're quite too dull for company; yet have I staid here all this while to save your precious life!

How. *(Ironically.)* Words can't repay such wond'rous care! Your sacrifice has been too grandly great!

Julia. It has indeed! but it is ended now. I see my uncle yonder, with my aunt, so may relinquish yours, for his protecting arm! *(Curtsies formally, and going, c.)*

How. *(Uneasily.)* Excuse me, Miss; but did I hear aright? You said you saw—

Julia. My uncle, sir!—who was *not* drowned—as

was so long supposed! Now let him change the object of his wrath, and pour it on himself!

[*Aside and exit, c.*]

How. (*Walks up and down.*) Am I awake?—or is this but a dream—a tantalizing dream? I feel like falling down a flight of stairs;—that's an unfailing sign of sleep! Can't some one bite my little finger off, to satisfy the doubt? Julia the General's niece!—it can't be real, this! (*Turns to where Julia stood.*) Miss Everst! She's gone:—and I have let her go, and stand here, like a fool, in conversation with myself!

[*Exit c.—Music resumes playing.*]

Enter LUCY, followed by FAIRFIELD, L.

Fair. (*Earnestly.*) Would you have had me play a coward's part, and live a recreant in the world's esteem? Could I be deaf to honor's voice?

Lucy. To honor's voice!—but I have heard too much! Pray let the subject end—never to be renewed! He calls such conflict 'honor's voice!' (*Aside.*)

Fair. Well, be it so—since such is your decree! 'Tis best I suffer pain, than you should offer violence to your heart!

Lucy. I do not understand your meaning, quite!

Fair. And yet 'tis plain as words can speak! I thought you loved me once!

Lucy. Well!

Fair. But, if you did, that time is past! This pretext frees you from an irksome tie! Lucy, you do not love me now!

Lucy. In spite of all you've done, and all you say: in spite of my own self—I do! and what is more, you know I do!—but build no hope on that—I'd die before I'd wed without return of love! (*He attempts to speak.*) Nay, do not speak; I've heard it all before, and fain would be deceived; but that your actions are so plain, and contradict your words!

Fair. What actions so profane my words? Do let me know with what I'm charged!

Lucy. How can you ask, yet know so well! Why

was I left for weary days, to pine in the belief of your endangered life; when all the while you knew there was no risk, yet kept that knowledge to yourself!

Fair. If that were so, I should deserve your hate, nor would I hope for more! I knew it not, until we left the field!

Lucy. Can this indeed be so?

Fair. Can it be otherwise, and I be what I am!

[*They retire in conversation towards R. H. U. E.*]

Enter MRS. HUNTER, followed by CAZADOR, C.

Mrs. H. (*Walks up and down, fanning herself violently.*) Don't talk to me, sir! don't talk to me, General Cazador!

Gen. C. Hunter—my dear—I claim my former name!

Lucy. (*To Fairfield.*) Then, Harry, we are friends once more! (*Gives him her hand: he kisses it, and they exit, R. U. E.*)

Mrs. H. Well, sir, Hunter, or Cazador—just which you please—don't talk to me! That's all I've got to say!

Gen. C. But, my dear!

Mrs. H. Don't "dear" me, General—

Gen. C. Hunter—my love!

Mrs. H. Hunter, be it then! I won't be "deared" by you! I've been your dupe, your jest, your laughing-stock, your—I shall expire with rage, and not give vent to half I want to say! (*Walks furiously.*)

Gen. C. Do calm yourself, my dear, and hear me speak a word!

Mrs. H. I am calm, sir! calm as—as—

Gen. C. As Vesuvius, when it overflows! (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. Calm as content, sir! calm as content: and yet I will not hear you speak; not now, nor ever more! Go back, sir, to Peru, and get a Spanish wife! Perhaps you've practised on that kind before!

Gen. C. You are angry now, my dear!

Mrs. H. (*Stops suddenly.*) General Cazador!

Gen. C. Hunter, my love! Hunter, if you please!

Mrs. H. General Hunter, or General Cazador, or General Hunter Cazador!—have you the impudence to doubt my being angry! If I had been the north pole, sir, and its extremest point, when I became your wife, your conduct has been such, you'd find me the equator, now!

Gen. C. I've crossed that line before—but not in such a storm! (*Aside.*)

Mrs. H. I *am* angry, sir,—with you—and shall be so till doomsday comes! We are strangers, General—

Gen. C. Hunter—my dear!

Mrs. H. We are strangers, sir!—as we have been for fifteen years! I have no husband now, and you no wife:—unless you've left one in Peru! (*Throws herself in a chair, and turns from Cazador.*)

Gen. C. 'Tis as I feared, my dear! You *are* angry with me, despite that fervent vow, which said no act of mine should ever rouse your wrath! (*Leans over her chair.*) Won't you forgive me? won't you, dear? (*She continues to turn from him.*) 'Twas but a harmless jest: repented and explained:—what further can you ask, or I accord? Are you relentless still?

Mrs. H. I am, sir; and shall be, to the last!

Gen. C. Then I must try another tack! (*Aside.*) Very well, madam! very well!—be mistress of your wish! I thought to meet a constant wife, but planned a harmless scheme to test her faith, which melted, fast as polar snow, in that same equatorial heat!

Mrs. H. Oh, dear! I had forgotten that! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. I will return, as you suggest that course; and from this hour you never see me more! (*Turns his back without moving from the spot.*)

Mrs. H. It will not do to let him go! I could not marry then, if e'en I had the chance! (*Aside.*)

Gen. C. I bid you, madam, eternally farewell!

Mrs. H. (*Rises and turns to him.*) Stay, General, stay! My heart relents, and prompts me to forgive!

Gen. C. It does!

Mrs. H. On solemn pledge you play such tricks no more!

Gen. C. Which pledge I most sincerely give! (*She takes his arm, and they retire, in conversation, towards R. H. U. E.*)

Enter JULIA, followed by HOWSON, C.

Julia. Nay, come no nearer—not another step! I'll not be persecuted by your prayers!

How. Mercy, fair saint! I only pray for that!

Julia. Mercy you don't deserve; for not an hour ago you knew not what it meant! I was condemned unheard; and, for a fault supposed, the sex must share my doom! 'Tis now the sex's turn to be avenged!

(*Crosses.*)

How. Don't kill me with those dreadful frowns! I was a fool! a dolt! a drivelling idiot—anything you choose to name, or think! But now, when reason is restored, restore yourself to me, and be a happy bride!

Julia. But that you seek such fate, it might be punishment enough for even crimes like yours! It is no envied lot, I'd have you know, to take for life "a heartless jilt," or even wed "a cold coquette!"

How. "The ghosts of buried thoughts are rising as 'she speaks! (*Aside.*)'" Is there no Lethe, Julia, for those phrenzied words! Be just, and own that I had cause—a seeming cause—for doubt, and fear, and rage!

Julia. For doubt, perhaps, but not for rage:—conclusions firm, and for ungallant speech! Before you gave your thoughts the rein, you should have waited the allotted time!

How. How could I wait! Patience had argued age, and frozen blood, and failing limbs! Sure jealousy is proof of love!

Julia. Not always, sir! It proves much more, and less than love, at times! It proves as well a mind infirm, or vicious heart! Defend me from such proof of love!

How. And so I will, henceforth; if you'll consent, and let me shield you with a husband's heart!

Julia. A husband's heart!—that heart, alas, might be my worst defence!

How. Your best defence, my heart would be; for it is doubly fortified,—by penitence and self-reproach! Consult your own, and let that speak my doom!

Julia. I thought to keep you in protracted pain; but since you say you're penitent,—and would be like to die—

How. I should be sure to die!—unless you bid me live!

Enter LUCY and FAIRFIELD, C.—They come slowly down, R.

Julia. (*Gives him her hand.*) Then live!—and merit mercy by your future life!

MRS. HUNTER and CAZADOR advance, L.

How. (*Kisses her hand.*) You are an angel, Julia!

Gen. C. (*Laughs.*) Of course she is—to you—in everything but wings!

Julia. Uncle, I'll fly, and prove I have those, too, if you get calling names!

Lucy. So, Julia, you've confirmed my words, and changed his plaintive cries to nuptial songs!

Fair. (*To Lucy.*) And what has Lucy done!

Mrs. H. Why she has done, as I foretold, and brought you here to make a concert with your nuptial songs.

Julia. And thus we end, with harmony, this most discordant day! (*Advances to the audience.*)

Pray don't condemn, with hasty thought—because we've practised jokes—

The humble efforts made by us, altho' we're called—*Fast Folks*;
But yield, with smiles, and generous hearts, the tribute of your
praise,

To California enterprise, and to its—*Early Days*!

EPILOGUE.

FAIRFIELD *advances to the audience.*

Fair. A moral—ere the curtain drops—to men of single life!
If e'er you wed, be sure and share your secrets with your wife!

LUCY *advances.*

Lucy. And, ladies,—if some thoughtless beau has caused you
needless pain,
Before you quite discard the youth: permit him to explain!

He may, perchance, have light to give, which you would
never see—

Fair. Until too late—as nearly chanced with Lucy and with
me! *[They retire.]*

MRS. HUNTER *advances.*

Mrs. H. Are any spirit rappers here, who sit in circles round,
To watch the tables tip, and dance, and leap from off
the ground?

CAZADOR *advances.*

Gen. C. (To Mrs. H.) Of course, my dear, they'll not confess!
They're deaf as any post!

Tell them in private, that you've seen—a living husband's ghost!
[They retire.]

HOWSON *advances.*

How. Is there some Howson in this throng? Some jealous-pated
wight!

Who broods upon some awful scene that late appalled his
sight?

Don't hide, my friend—upon the right!—that youth of
middle size!

But learn philosophy from me, and—don't believe your
eyes! *[Retires.]*

Enter BAKER, leading BLUSTER on by the collar, L.

Bak. I've got this rascal, and a writ, to take him off to jail!
He thinks he'll find, by stopping here, some friend to go
his bail!

Blus. And so I will—and more than one!—my friends are not a
few!

What says this chap upon my left?—or you! or you! or
you! *(Points to the house.)*

Enter JENNY and BARNEY, R.

Jen. Don't go his bail! for if you do, you'll have the sum to pay!
And, certain as I'm Barney's wife, the Colonel runs away!

Bar. Sure Jenny tells the blessed thruth, as certain as you're
born!

So, if you go the bla'guard's bail, just do it—in a horn!
[*Aside—all retire.*]

JULIA advances.

Julia. Kind friends, of either sex, and both—one parting word
to-night!

'Tis well to seem, but better still, to always act, aright!
Appearances may but conceal a soul bowed down by sin:
Much may be borne, if we but feel an honest heart within.

THE END.

POSITION OF CHARACTERS.

FAIRFIELD: LUCY. HOWSON: JULIA. CAZADOR: MRS. HUNTER.



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and compliments of The author

FAST FOLKS;

OR,

The Early Days of California.

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

JOSEPH A. NUNES, Esq.

PHILADELPHIA:
BARNARD & JONES, PRINTERS,
No. 510 MINOR STREET.
1861.







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